



November 2020 | Vol. 24 • Issue 8.2

Digital Edition

Gerstlauer coaster's setting makes for a unique experience

## Bellewaerde opens Wakala, family coaster with signature thrills

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

YPRES, Belgium — There is no question that the COVID-19 crisis wrecked numerous plans and attraction openings in 2020. One of those that still went forward was Wakala at Bellewaerde. Supplied by Gerstlauer Amusement Rides, the one-of-a-kind coaster diversified the park's attractions lineup, while still keeping it in the family range.

Placed in the park's Canadian section, Wakala is themed around the indigenous Kwakwaka'wakw people of the Pacific Northwest coast. The stylings of the ride reflect the culture and character of this region of British Columbia. The Native American tribe can still be found around the neighboring islands and around the forests and water in Western Canada. With canoes as their primary means of transportation, the ride reflects that with trains that resemble watercraft.

"Since the attraction is built

► See WAKALA, page 6



Wakala's reverse point is positioned over the park's lake, which makes for an unnerving thrill as the ride nears the end of the track. COURTESY MARTIN VALT

## Scene75 Dayton overcomes tornado, pandemic with expansion, reopening

A rebuilt and redesigned blacklight minigolf course is just the beginning of changes at Scene75 Dayton.

AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON



AT: John W.C. Robinson

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DAYTON, Ohio — In 2012, father and son Les and Jonah Sandler took a risk, converting a rental building Les owned into a large entertainment center. **Scene75** debuted in Dayton, Ohio, to the joy of the local community. That FEC eventually launched a chain of giant FECs, with Scene75 locations expanding to Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio, as well as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Over Memorial Day weekend 2019, the original Scene75 Entertainment Center was struck by the destructive tornadoes that hit the Dayton-area. The location was left flooded, with only a partial roof, suffering from collapsed walls and severely damaged attractions. After being

shuttered for 18 months since the tornadoes, Scene75 Dayton is ready to reopen its doors and welcome guests. However, there's a whole new Scene75 inside those doors for visitors to discover.

From the moment Jonah Sandler and his team surveyed the damage, they knew this would not be just a simple rebuild.

"We are beyond excited to be able to reopen our doors to the Dayton community," said Sandler to the local *Dayton Daily News*. "While planning our recovery after the tornadoes, we decided that it wasn't enough to just rebuild; we wanted to make Scene75 Dayton bigger and better."

"We originally had hoped to expand sometime around the fourth quarter of 2019 to

► See SCENE75, page 8



AMUSEMENT VIEWS  
Page 4



PARKS & FAIRS  
Pages 10-41



WATER PARKS  
Pages 42-47



BUSINESS  
Pages 48-57



SAFETY  
Pages 58-69



CLASSIFIEDS  
Page 70

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# AMUSEMENT VIEWS

**AT NOTEBOOK:** Tim Baldwin, [tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com](mailto:tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com)

## Remaining thankful



Baldwin

The IAAPA Expo week is one I look forward to. There is a wonderful feeling of reunion each year. That one-chance-a-year opportunity to meet with so many industry friends is always rewarding.

IAAPA made the right call for 2020. Logical as it was, it still leaves a hollow part inside each of us who embraced the show. It's just one more thing added to the pile of frustrations and heartbreaks this infuriating year has thrown at us.

Even though we aren't there in person, I am thankful for the friendships that I would have enjoyed while there. Its November placement always lets me return home for Thanksgiving week more thankful than ever. Even though 2020 isn't allowing us to see each other in person, hopefully we are all still appreciative of our friends within the industry. As the pandemic started, people were pretty cognizant of calling friends to check on how they were doing. As the reality of the long-term effects set in, we all sort of became dulled to the initial shock. Perhaps we should make an effort as this year winds down to make a return to that. Connect again. Tell each other that we are grateful for their friendship, even beyond the business dealings.

And in that vein, perhaps we should not stop there.

We could go through a ream of paper listing the hardships, heartbreak and disappointments this year has wrought. It's dreadful. But there are still takeaways to be thankful for: stronger quality time with family, opportunities to organize or work on projects, our parks are cleaner and safer than ever, time dedicated to volunteer efforts, a spark to get creative and think in new ways, those long overdue cleaning projects around the house, etc. There were some silver linings.

I think all of us are savvy enough to realize that just by hanging a new calendar in a handful of weeks that the world will not magically change in a finger snap. It will take some time. However, that shouldn't stop us from being hopeful. I know how much I am missing people, but I am thankful to know this is only temporary. Knowing I will see hundreds of industry friends again is an encouraging light at the end of the tunnel.

On behalf of *Amusement Today*, allow me to say how thankful we are for the friendship, support and warmth we receive from our industry friends. You are important. We wish everyone a fantastic Thanksgiving and a wonderful holiday season. Please stay safe so that next year will be twice as nice when we meet.

Let us realize that if we have a roof over our head, food on the table, and family and friends to keep us encouraged, we are still richly blessed.

**FLINT'S VIEW:** Bubba Flint



**INDUSTRY VOICE:** John W.C. Robinson, [jrobinson@amusementtoday.com](mailto:jrobinson@amusementtoday.com)

## Rolling with the changes

From every angle, 2020 has been a year of change. It has been filled with change in our everyday lives, change in how we communicate and change within our industry. Even commonplace, everyday tasks like going to the bank or grocery store have become completely different than we knew them to be.

Our industry has seen downsizing, layoffs and closures. Attractions that were able to open did so under very limited capacity and with new measures in place throughout nearly every step of the midway. And, now, we are in the midst of a November that will not feature an IAAPA Expo for the first time in more than five decades.

Fairs and carnivals get canceled. Midway operators set up in mall parking lots and operate independently while food concessionaires set up with takeout offerings. Fresh air concerns shutdown most indoor entertainment theaters within parks. Pop-up song-and-dance shows entertain guests outdoors throughout the midway. In-person classrooms at safety educa-



Robinson

tion seminars present difficult COVID-19 hurdles. Industry leaders restructure the seminars to include an array of virtual offerings for certification.

Change is inevitable. As I'm writing this, the U.S. election is being finalized and all signs point to a new president for the United States of America. With that,

we can be certain that more change is to come.

However, just as we have throughout the ups and downs of 2020, we will continue to adapt, adjust, move forward ... and roll with the changes.

We don't know what 2021 has in store for us or our industry. Around the corner could be new regulations, new policies. There may even be more closures. There also may be renewed hope. There may be new openings, new ideas and new opportunities to return the smile to guests' faces.

We know that whatever the days ahead bring, we will find our way through it and discover new ways to keep our industry going and our turnstiles turning.

*Opinions expressed on this page are those of the columnist(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the publisher.*



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# 2 MINUTE DRILL



**AT: Janice Witherow**

**Bill Alter, W. A. Alter, Inc.**

Legend: a famous or notorious person, especially in a particular field. This sums up **Bill Alter's** life and contributions to the amusement industry. His storied tenure includes serving as vice president of sales for **National Ticket Company**, past **IAAPA** board member, **IAAPA** Manufacturers and Suppliers Chairman and past member of the original Applause Award Board of Governors. Bill has also passionately chaired all of the 17 annual **IAAPA/Give Kids The World** charity golf tournaments. His good nature is a trademark as someone he once mentored relayed. When she worked for him, he was so happy when she bought her first house because Bill told her, "an employee in debt would be a good employee!" He's known for his ambition, kindness and optimism ... good traits for a legend.

**Title:**

Owner of W. A. Alter, Inc. (Alter Enterprises).

**Number of years in the industry:** Over 60, I joined National Ticket in 1959, my first IAAPA trade show was in 1964 in Chicago. I have attended 56 straight years only missing last year.

**Best thing about the industry:** The industry leaders world-wide whose management style is showing that they really want their guests to enjoy themselves and have fun.

**Favorite amusement ride:** The train; I have been to hundreds of amusement parks, and I always try to take a ride on the train!

**If I wasn't working in the amusement industry, I would be...** Selling something ... probably real estate or a financial service.

**Biggest challenge facing our industry:**  
Reopening after COVID-19 and convincing patrons to return to the parks and attractions.

**The thing I like most about amusement/ water park season is...** The people! Seeing the happy faces of families with children with smiles is priceless.

**My biggest accomplishment has been...**  
Taking both National Ticket and Alter  
Enterprises into the international marketplace,  
with world-wide customers.

**In one word, my life is...** Interesting.

**I could sit and talk to this person forever...**  
James Michener, author. I have had the opportunity to meet many celebrities, movie stars and athletes; however, the most memorable person was James Michener. My wife and I shared a meal with his wife and him and the conversation was most impressive.

**If I could have a “do-over” in life, it would be...** To learn foreign languages. I have had the opportunity to travel to close to 100 countries, and I wish I were multilingual or, at least, bilingual.



**Bill Alter (pictured alongside his wife, Jane Anne) is known for his ambition, kindness and optimism. COURTESY BILL ALTER**

**Favorite appetizer:** Lump crab meat

**The last thing I do before leaving work is...**  
Tidy up my desk.

**The last thing I “Googled” was...** An industry leader, looking for contact information to ask him to be a sponsor in the 18th IAAPA/Give Kids The World annual charity golf tournament held in Orlando in November.

**It's November! I celebrate Thanksgiving Day by...** Always returning from the IAAPA Trade Show in November and gathering our entire family at home for Thanksgiving dinner, often with invited international and other guests.

**When I look out my front door at home, I see...** A beautiful neighborhood, with many trees, some over 100 years old.

**It is 3 p.m. on a workday. Where would we typically find you?** I have had a home office for over 25 years, and I would be in front of my PC.

**The last thing I cooked was ...** Apple pies

**My latest TV obsession:**  
PBS "Masterpiece Theater"

**When I need some peace and quiet, I go to...**  
Sit and read in the living room in our home.

**You are at the grocery store. What aisle do you spend the most time...** The produce aisle. We eat a large amount of fresh fruit.

**When people come to visit me, I make sure to take them to...** Manhattan and the Broadway theater and lately to the 9/11 Memorial Museum.

**My perfect Sunday is...** Being with our granddaughter and family members at events, like the HEAD OF THE CHARLES in Boston, or attending our grandson's soccer games in Hoboken, N.J., followed by dinner together.

## THE INDUSTRY SEEN

## *The pause that refreshes*



**POTTSVILLE, Pa.** — Taking the new short 33-mile road trip in October to visit the new gift shop and museum at the Yuengling Brewery in Pottsville, Pa., from Knoebel's Amusement Resort were Dick Knoebel (middle) and Jeannie Reedy (middle, standing) and *Amusement Today* Publisher Gary Slade. During their visit, they were able to have a visit with Richard L. Yuengling, Jr. (right) a fifth-generation owner. The new museum tells the history of the popular brewery and is complete with the Yuengling family tree. D. G. Yuengling & Sons is the nation's oldest brewery in America, established in 1829 and remains the largest wholly American-owned brewery in the United States. COURTESY YUENGLING


## Amusement Today updates rates, 2021 media guide available online

ARLINGTON, Texas — As of the May 2020 issue, *Amusement Today* has switched to digital only distribution for the time being. The Digital Edition has been an overwhelming success with even more readers viewing the monthly content and all ads hyperlinked directly to advertisers' websites. As *Amusement Today* saves on printing costs, the staff has passed that savings on to its advertisers by significantly reducing ad rates.

"We know 2020 was a struggle for our entire industry," said Founder and Publisher Gary Slade. "As our industry rebuilds in 2021, we've reduced our print issue rates significantly to help assure our valued advertisers can still get their message to *Amusement Today's* over 9,000 monthly digital readers."


The new rates reflect nearly a 30% discount from previous base rates. The popular economy ads have been reduced to \$100 per insertion, ensuring an affordable method for all advertisers to reach the industry decision-makers and leaders who rely on *Amusement Today* as their amusement news source. Other electronic media rates remained the same.

The complete 2021 Media Guide with updated rates and ad sizes is available at [amusementtoday.com/mediaguide](http://amusementtoday.com/mediaguide).




**2024 PRINT ADVERTISING SIZES AND RATES**  
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
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
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
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
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**1/4 PAGE**




1/4 page	1/2 page	3/4 page
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**1/5 PAGE**



1/4 page	1/2 page	3/4 page
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*Phone Area Sponsorship Available*



The 2021 *Amusement Today* Media Guide and Print Calendar is now available online. All ad rates have been updated to reflect a near-30% discount to advertisers as the amusement industry rebuilds.





A canoe motif gives each train additional character. COURTESY BELLEWAERDE, MARTIN VALT

## ►WAKALA

### Continued from page 1

in the Canada themed zone, it was an obvious choice to match the theming of the zone to the attraction — which we also did with the attraction Dawson Duel that was new in 2017,” said a park spokesperson. “In the search for inspiration, we found the stories about the ‘Kwakiutl’ culture. Since they live in the woods next to water, it was an immediate match with the attraction which is also built in the woods and next to the water. Therefore we chose to add some extra details about this culture into the theming of the attraction, for example the canoe-shaped train and the placement of totems.”

The coaster was announced in the autumn of 2019 and construction began with hopes of a spring debut. With the global health crisis, those plans were postponed to early summer, but the ride did welcome guests who visited the park this season.

Management embraces families as the park’s primary audience. Wakala fits well into this demographic but doesn’t shortchange on the fun. A statement on the park’s website says: “Bellewaerde consciously chose a family coaster in order to allow the family target audience to experience unique and unforgettable moments together.”

The new coaster boasts a

rarity in that it features both a chain lift and a tire-lift booster section. Departure from the station places the 10-car trains directly onto a chain lift. From there, riders enter a sinuous wriggle of curves and dips that traverse over walkways, green space and even over water. A significant portion of the ride straddles waterways and stretches out into a lake. After a curvaceous First Act, the trains enter a second lift, this time using booster wheels to propel the ride into more curves, dips and into its signature move — a stalling reverse point out over the lake reaching 69 feet in the air. As the train soars out over the water, the track curves up and ends. Riders momentarily feel weightlessness and then travel a section of the track in reverse. A section of tires serve as brakes and holds the train in place while a segment of transfer track rotates into place. The tires then move the riders forward and back into the station.

Building parts of the coaster out into the lake was certain to require planning and create challenges. “It certainly did!” **Stefaan Lemey**, general director of Bellewaerde, told *Amusement Today*. “The lake is 100% natural for more than 100 years, so we had to examine the bottom of the lake and supporting earth layers. We had to lower the water level of the lake to be able to push concrete foundation poles

into the ground. It was a huge — and expensive — work effort to get those heavy machines into position to be able to make the in-depth foundations for the different track columns.”

For Gerstlauer, the challenge wasn’t as extreme. “Being over water [on our end] did not make a difference. The only challenge is to design the ride so that under all circumstances, it never reaches the top,” said **Simonis Andreas**, Gerstlauer. “This is simply realized by using the law of physics, so that the reverse point is higher than the top of lift 2. Furthermore, the speed of lift 2 is monitored constantly by the control system.”

When asked by *AT* why the decision to go with Gerstlauer, Lemey said: “We had some ideas on what features we wanted to integrate and how we wanted the ride to interact with the lake and the environment as well as with the other family ride, Dawson Duel. At the same time we wanted to have a high ride capacity as we knew upfront that with this budget, we could hit a top-1 ride for our family visitors. We discussed our ideas with several ride constructors, and Gerstlauer came out to be the best partner for this iconic project.”

“The cooperation with the Bellewaerde and **Compagnie des Alpes** team was great and challenging. The layout was developed together with Simon Julien from Compagnie des



Alpes and Andreas Simonis from Gerstlauer,” said **Erwin Haider**, Gerstlauer. “The idea of the forwards/backwards portion was originally designed for another layout on another area in the Bellewaerde Park, but then in 2017 it was incorporated into the actual layout that was built on this location.”

“The canoe theme of the front car was developed with computer aided design,” said Andreas. “This enables us to visualize the look and appearance before any models are built and to check for any interferences with the existing car structure as well as the roller coaster track. We worked together with **Cyprien Pichon**, CdA’s concept designer, who was responsible for the overall design of the train, the themed painting and the structure in the fiberglass.”

Total track length is 2,165 feet long, although riders travel over a portion of the layout in both directions. Top speed is 31 mph, firmly putting it in the family-friendly category. Its tall-

est point is 70 feet.

“Bellewaerde is consciously investing in this coaster because it is a family attraction for the whole family and suitable for children from one meter in height,” said Lemey. “Wakala is a perfect addition to the existing offer in the park. Bellewaerde offers its visitors a new sensation with this attraction, which both young and old can experience together.”

Bellewaerde believes its core audience is families with children between six and 12 years old.

Even with a portion of the track serving as a forward-backward shuttle experience, Wakala can still operate with three trains, making for an hourly capacity of 1,000 riders.

An investment of €7.5 million (\$8.8 million) was made for the new roller coaster. Wakala was the largest single investment in an attraction since 1999. It is the park’s fifth coaster attraction.

Coaster fans have praised the ride for its creativity in this

► See WAKALA, page 7



The park’s curvy and twisted layout stretches over land and water. Wakala features both a chain lift and a tire-driven booster lift. COURTESY BELLEWAERDE, MARTIN VALT



## Photos donated to National Roller Coaster Museum

ARLINGTON, Texas — On October 21, the **National Roller Coaster Museum & Archives** (NRCMA) acquired a donation from Arkansas-based **Simmons Banks** of these two framed photos (measuring 54 inches by 40 inches) from the bank's North Arlington, Texas, branch location which had closed earlier in the month. On display in the branch's main lobby area, these framed prints feature the Judge Roy Scream roller coaster at **Six Flags Over Texas** (top) and slides that are no longer in operation at **Six Flags Hurricane Harbor**. Shown here with the prints is **Jill Lawrence**, facilities manager for Simmons Bank. NRCMA board member **Gary Slade** worked with bank officials to arrange the donation.



AT/GARY SLADE

## ► WAKALA Continued from page 6

family market as well as the ride's smoothness.

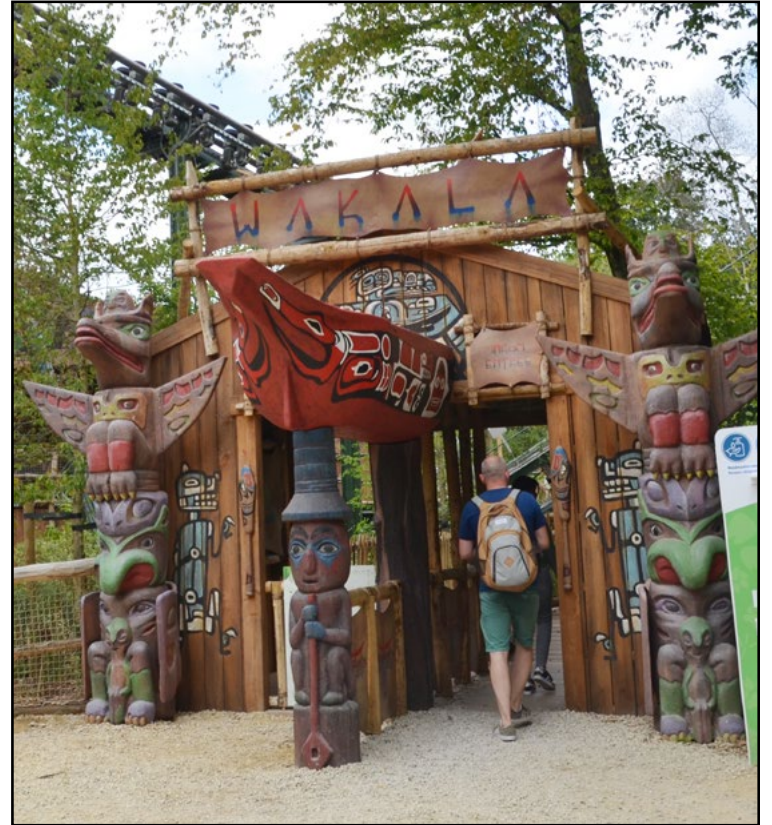
No attractions were removed to install the coaster. "There was an isle with squirrel monkeys that visitors could visit," said a park spokesman. "However, these animals have now been relocated to another place in the park, the Jungle Zone."

The reaction has shown park management that their choice was a good one.

"Wakala has been welcomed very positively by our visitors," a park spokesman told *Amusement Today*. "Our surveys have shown that Wakala is now the No. 1 favorite attraction of our guests."

Other than rides, the park offers a mix of activities that include exotic animals and exploring green environments. Bellewaerde has been in operation since 1954.

[Bellewaerde.be](http://Bellewaerde.be)



Totems and artistic details pay tribute to the Canadian tribe the ride is themed after. COURTESY BELLEWAERDE

## FAMILY COASTER

Ready for a spectacular ride adventure? In the Belgian amusement park Bellewaerde you can experience an exciting and individual ride with our new family coaster „**WAKALA**“. The roller coaster is about 655 meters long and about 19 meters high. During the ride the trains reach a maximum speed of approximately 54 km/h.

The ride has several elements that offer fun for the whole family. Among others, there are two lift hills, one of which has a slight acceleration. The track has different elements such as: Panorama Turn, Twisted Drop, Fly By, Camelback, Double Down, Slalom Turn, Banked Camelhump, Banked Turn and Camelhump on which the trains move forward and sometimes backward.

Experience the adventure for the whole family with „**WAKALA**“ by Gerstlauer at the Belgian amusement park Bellewaerde!



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► **SCENE75**

Continued from page 1

first quarter of 2020,” explained Sandler to *Amusement Today*. “The tornado changed the plan but also in many ways forced our hand into the expansion as the 36-foot-tall wall that separated the proposed addition from the original floorplan was destroyed in the storm.”

As Sandler and his team worked to rebuild the location, with plans to reopen in late-Spring 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic struck causing a nationwide shutdown of virtually everything. It not only closed the other Scene75 locations but delayed the reopening of the Dayton location.

“While there was some activity in our [Dayton] building for most of the shutdown, COVID certainly slowed us down,” said Sandler, as the company attempted to press on with the rebuild and expansion during the government imposed shutdown. “We had difficulty getting all of our vendors on site and also difficulty with insurance payouts. It has been an extremely long process and rebuild.”

As the shutdown ended, Scene75 began reopening its FECs in other areas. Sandler’s team assembled what many considered the gold standard for FEC operation under the pandemic’s restrictions with



A double-decker Chance Carousel (left), named The Adeline, and a Visa Spinning Coaster 5.0 (right), dubbed Tsunami, highlight the additions to the reopening Scene75 Dayton, Ohio, location. AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

their *Stay Safe Together Playbook*. However, while Cincinnati, Cleveland and other locations welcomed guests once again, Dayton still remained shuttered.

Within its walls, something new was taking shape. The center expanded its entertainment offerings with an additional 40,000 square feet, bringing the venue to a total of 164,000 square feet in size. It added new attractions, including a Moser Drop Tower, a rebuilt blacklight minigolf, an exciting new 18-hole minigolf course dubbed Sunset Golf and a 300-seat banquet center.

“As we expanded our size in Dayton, we looked to our other locations for inspiration,” said Sandler. “[After our success with a similar room in Columbus] We felt it critical to add a large

banquet center. Scene75 Dayton 2.0 will allow for up to 300 guests to sit within the same room [as restrictions ease] inside a beautiful space capable of hosting a casual gathering to more formal (yet fun) wedding ceremonies.

“Sunset Golf is Scene75’s first non-blacklight miniature golf course. Its landscape and water features add beauty outside the windows of our new banquet center.”

Two highlights of the expansion are a roller coaster and carousel contained within the giant FEC. Thrillseekers and families will delight together aboard the Tsunami roller coaster, a Visa Spinning Coaster 5.0 model. For those seeking more relaxed fun, a Chance Rides double-decker carousel anchors the new

expansion. Both attractions were supplied to Scene75 Dayton in deals brokered by Rides 4 U of Somerville, New Jersey.

“I am most excited to see families enjoy our two story carousel,” offered Sandler. “My grandmother, who I was very close to, passed away in May. I was unable to spend time with her prior to her passing due to COVID restrictions. To honor her memory, I named the carousel ‘The Adeline,’ a nod to her name, Adele. She would be so proud to see families enjoy the attraction.”

With guests being welcomed back, finally, to Scene75’s Dayton location at the end of November, the local community is chomping at the bit to enjoy the facility once again.

“We have had incredible traction thus far on social media, with some of our live video tours [of the newly updated facility] exceeding 100,000 views,” said Sandler.

“Our community is excited. While we have reopened four locations from COVID-19 shutdowns over the last six months, this is our first true opening of a ‘new’ center,” added Sandler. “We imagine we will need to be very diligent at the doors to ensure the proper flow of traffic into the venue. Up until this point with the reopenings, guest traffic has been limited more so by people’s desire to visit than the actual capacity requirements. We envision the reopening of Dayton will see the opposite effect.”

•scene75.com

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# PARKS, FAIRS & ATTRACTIONS

► Roland Mack animatronic — page 14 / Lake Placid mountain coaster — page 18 / FAIRS — pages 38-41

## Universal Beijing Resort unveils park experiences within forthcoming resort

BEIJING — **Universal Beijing Resort** unveiled details of multiple entertainment experiences which will be available for guests at its expansive destination resort.

The resort will feature the **Universal Studios Beijing** theme park, **Universal CityWalk Beijing** and two hotels, the **Universal Studios Grand Hotel** and the **NUO Resort Hotel**.

The Universal Beijing Resort experience is unique to China, it will represent a collection of Universal's popular attractions from around the world as well as specially themed experiences reflecting China's rich cultural heritage. A waterway connects all key locations. Guests will enter the CityWalk entertainment complex and approach the Universal Grand Hotel, which will serve as the gateway to the entire park. Once inside, seven immersive and expansive, themed lands will unfold around a central lagoon.

"We and our local partners, including **Beijing Tourism Group**, are creating one of the most magnificent theme park destinations ever built — right here in Beijing," said **Tom Mehrmann**, president and general manager

of Universal Beijing Resort. "It is the fruit of co-creation, merging Universal's decades of global theme park experience with our partner's deep insights on China. Over 100,000 constructors, more than 500 designers and artists, and more than 500 suppliers and partners from around the world jointly will make the project possible."

The seven themed lands include Kung Fu Panda Land of Awesomeness, Transformers Metrobase, Minion Land, The Wizarding World of Harry Potter, Jurassic World Isla Nublar, Hollywood and Waterworld. In typical Universal theme park fashion, these lands will be at the heart of the guest experience and will bring some of popular films' and pop culture's most compelling stories and characters to life.

Anchoring each section will be a blend of unique and familiar main attractions. The unique flume ride Kung Fu Panda Journey of the Dragon Warrior; the Decepticoaster roller coaster; the interactive Despicable Me Minion Mayhem; the popular Harry Potter and the Forbidden Journey; and turbulent Jurassic World Adventure will provide the centerpiece for

each themed-area, respectively.

With 24 shows and entertainment experiences, Universal Beijing Resort hopes to blur the lines between stage and cinema in first-ever entertainment experiences utilizing live performers, interactive props and unique sets. Universal Beijing Resort unveiled two unique shows in its announcement: **Lights, Camera, Action!** featured in Hollywood Boulevard and **Waterworld Stunt Show**. With work from world-renowned directors, **Zhang Yimou** and **Steven Spielberg**, **Lights, Camera, Action!** merges both Western and Eastern popular culture, leading guests into the behind-the-scenes glitz and glamour of film special effects. In the **Waterworld Stunt Show**, guests will join in an immersive adventure and experience a thrilling water battle that gives them an up-close look at the stunt show of water motorboats, high-dives, gunfire, explosions, as well as a plane crash.

"This is a story of designers of different cultures thinking and working together to collaborate, impact and co-create," said **John Gentile**, senior director & executive producer of **Universal Parks and Resorts**.



The Universal Studios Grand Hotel will serve as the gateway for guests to the forthcoming Universal Studios Beijing. COURTESY UNIVERSAL PARKS AND RESORTS



A Zierer Wave Swinger is one of four rides the company supplied to Ticiland, a new Swiss theme park near the German border. COURTESY ZIERER

## Four Zierer attractions open with new Ticiland park

STEIN AM RHEIN, Switzerland — **Ticiland**, a new indoor theme park opened to the public on October 10. Located in Switzerland, close to the German border, the first phase of the project included four **Zierer** rides. The company delivered a Wave Swinger, Family Tower, Kontiki and Force Two Family Coaster. The rides are perfectly suited for the new park which is targeted at families with young children. Completion of the second phase of the attraction — which includes the development of an adjacent outdoor area — is scheduled for next year.

Currently, Zierer has more amusement rides in production for facilities in Great Britain, Germany and Asia. The company's after sales team has been assisting with guidance and best practices regarding COVID-19 safety precautions as well as other service matters.

[zierer.com](http://zierer.com)



Zierer Force Two Family Coaster model opened with the park, giving the indoor facility a family roller coaster. The ride takes guests across a lake and past the themed rocks of Maggia. COURTESY ZIERER

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# Pandemic postpones, does not hamper debut of Gulliver's Valley theme park

SOUTH YORKSHIRE, U.K. — Set in 250 acres, minutes from the Sheffield border, Gulliver's Valley theme park boasts 50 attractions for a family day out or a memorable vacation. The theme park is part of a nearly \$50 million project within the Gulliver's Theme Park resort franchise.

Opened on the site of a former coal mine, the theme park was originally scheduled to welcome guests in early June. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a shutdown that not only delayed the grand opening, but also final construction at the park.

"To ensure the safety of our staff and to adhere to the government guidance for people to stay at home, we decided to temporarily suspend construction work on our Gulliver's Valley site on March 23," stated Julie Dalton, managing director of Gulliver's Theme Parks and Resorts to the local media in March.

That delay did not throw the project off track, however, and the park opened successfully a little later than anticipated on July 11. Like most attractions opening in 2020, visitor numbers had to be limited for social distancing, but few would dispute the new park

became an enormous addition to the area.

"When we started work on the park, we didn't ever expect to be faced with a global pandemic," said Dalton, "but I am proud to say our team [rose] to the challenge and worked hard to enable us to open, just one month later than we initially planned."

"After what has been a really challenging period due to our delayed opening, it's just been fantastic to see people come to the park and enjoy a great day out."

The park features multiple themed lands including Toyland, Western World, Smugglers Wharf, The Lost World and the kid-friendly area dubbed Gully Town. The Dragon's Lair indoor play area, featured climbing walls and a bounce castle, welcomed guests in early August when local COVID restrictions were further eased.

"We are a family business who has put absolutely everything into this new resort, so to have the backing of our customers, who really are at the heart of everything we do, has been so important to us. This is just the beginning for Gulliver's Valley and there are lots more exciting things to come."

•gulliversvalleyresort.co.uk



The new Gulliver's Valley theme park includes 70 attractions. Theming includes castles, giant dinosaurs as well the park's namesake Lemuel Gulliver. COURTESY GULLIVER'S VALLEY

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# Family surprises Europa-Park's Roland Mack with special animatronic

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

RUST, Germany — When a park is family owned and run, certain opportunities arise to make incredibly special moments. Following the terrible fire that completely destroyed Pirates in Batavia at Europa-Park in 2018, fans weren't the only ones to mourn the loss of the massive dark ride. The Mack family itself felt the blow. As the anchor attraction in the Holland section of the park, the newly rebuilt and reimagined Pirates in Batavia opened in July with spectacular grandeur, which included more than 80 animatronics within the engaging journey. One was particularly of note.

Knowing what the ride meant to the family, and, in particular, her father, **Ann-Kathrin Mack** originated the idea and worked in secret alongside her brothers **Michael Mack** and **Thomas Mack** to surprise Europa-Park's cofounder and owner, **Roland Mack**.

"Shortly before the grand reopening of Pirates in Batavia, my three children Michael, Thomas and Ann-Kathrin approached me and wanted to ride the attraction together with



Roland Mack poses with his doppelganger animatronic. At right, the Mack family takes a journey on the reimagined Pirates in Batavia dark ride. COURTESY EUROPA-PARK

me. It was a huge surprise to suddenly discover myself as a magician in the wonderful scenery in the middle of the harbor city Batavia," said Roland Mack. "It was a special moment in the circle of the family and a wonderful memory."

Pulling off the surprise involved several parties, among them, animatronic supplier **Garner Holt Productions**.

"The park is wonderful; the people are wonderful. You have this personal care to it," said Vice President – Creative Development **Bill Butler**,

Garner Holt Productions.

Having done thousands of animatronics over his career, **Garner Holt**, founder, told *Amusement Today* that he has done less than 20 of living people.

"We've done museums and that type of thing, but this was a very special one," said Holt. "Roland's stature is almost like that of a **Walt Disney** in Europe."

"We wrote the storyline for the attraction," said Butler, "and [Europa-Park consultant] **Chip Cleary** had mentioned to us they wanted to do the surprise in the main scene. We thought it would

be fun for him to be a magician character. That's unusual and kind of emblematic of what he does there every day creating the magic for the park. We knew it was a secret, and in all of our documentation, we just referred to it as a magician character."

"It was kind of funny," noted Holt, "His family had to sneak around and get a jacket and glasses without him figuring out. Ann-Kathrin had to liberate glasses when he was out of town."

The animatronic was the last piece to be installed just before the ride was to open the

next day. That's when the family took a test ride.

"It was a wonderful surprise, which really means a lot to me," said Mack. "The pirate cruise in the Dutch-themed area has always been one of my favorite attractions, not only because of the many unique details, but I also have very special memories of my father **Franz Mack** and the architect **Ulrich Damrau**, who developed and realized the European themed concept with us.

► See MACK, page 16

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## Continued growth for Dubai theme parks



DUBAI — Dubai has seen its amusement industry grow in stages; however, the last five years has seen an exponential growth and it plans to keep up the momentum going for the coming years. IMG Worlds of Adventure theme park, which opened in 2016, and three additional major parks — Legoland, Motiongate and Bollywood — have all set the ball rolling with the promised of further expansion and additions. Motiongate recently announced two forthcoming roller coasters themed to the cinematic properties of *John Wick* and *Now You See Me*. DXB Entertainments confirmed work on its Legoland Hotel is on track to open in December 2020. First announced in early 2017, the Legoland Hotel is being developed as a joint venture with the U.K.'s Merlin Entertainment Group. The hotel is being built on 300,000 square feet of land adjacent to the Legoland Dubai theme park and will feature Lego models in every room, a disco elevator, castle play area and themed rooms. "We are currently in the process of rolling out many exciting surprises with the launch of our new rides and the re-opening of our theme parks," said Mohamed Almulla, CEO and managing director, DXB Entertainments. "During the [COVID-related] closure of operations from March to September 2020, we have focused on the enhancement plan which includes the addition of 10 new rides in our Bollywood Parks Dubai and two new rides in Motiongate Dubai." COURTESY MERLIN ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

## ► MACK Continued from page 14

Getting a true likeness can be difficult. Holt observed that in each case some family members may think the likeness is quite accurate while another may disagree. In this case, the whole family was pleased.

"The most important thing when doing human figures — unless they have extreme features — is to use a lot of photographic images. We've done this a lot, so we're good at what we do. We can do 3D renderings with the computer," he said.

"The more visible a person is, the more scrutiny it will be under," added Butler. "The family was very happy with the sculpture and the paint and scrutinized the hairstyle and the hair length. When we put the glasses on — boom! — he came to life."

The figure does a magic trick in the scene. Holding a crystal ball, the animatronic shows there is nothing inside the glass. The figure places a sorcerer's hat over the ball and then lifts it to reveal Ed, the park's mascot.

When *AT* asked Mack if he felt the figure was an Easter Egg for fans to find, he said, "Absolutely! I have often been asked about this. Once I met a guest in the park who actually

asked me if I was taking a break from my job in Batavia."

"Everyone was working up to the opening," said Butler. "Right after the reveal at the opening, they had a reception in the new restaurant with the ride, and Roland came up and slapped me so hard I thought I was going to fall over. He said, 'That looks incredible. That looks amazing.' He was ecstatic."

The opening and reveal brought some tears from the people who were present. "He is the park," said Butler. "This new Pirates is so world-class, it underscores how far the park has come in 45 years."

The ride's official debut was on July 28. Since its opening, it has received rave reviews on social media.

"The fire and loss of the Pirates in Batavia tore a deep hole in our hearts in 2018. The sympathy of the industry, as well as our visitors and fans from all over the world, was overwhelming. For Michael, Thomas and Ann-Kathrin, the exotic boat trip of **Mack Rides** was part of their childhood. Mastering the reconstruction together with them was very moving for me as a father. In a way, this emotional event has brought us all even closer together."

•europapark.de

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# Lake Placid adds ADG mountain coaster, largest in North America

AT: B. Derek Shaw  
bdshaw@amusementtoday.com

LAKE PLACID, New York – **ADG Mountainsides**, Cohoes, New York, opened its latest mountain coaster in the heart of the Adirondack Mountains at the **US Olympic Training Center** in Lake Placid. At 7,600 feet in length, **Cliffside Coaster** is the longest mountain coaster in North America, travelling alongside the **Mt. Van Hoevenberg Olympic Bobsled Run**, home of the 1932 and 1980 Olympic bobsled track. First rides took place October 11 with all necessary COVID precautions in place.

One of the highlights of the ride is a timed on-board audio system that allows visitors to experience what it was like to be an Olympic bobsledder during the **1980 Olympic Winter Games**. "When you're going up, it has audio playing in the mountain coaster, which is the first of its kind for any of the new mountain coasters. The soundtrack is narrated by **John Morgan** whose voice you will recognize from the popular movie 'Cool Runnings,'" said **Elise Ruocco**, digital communications manager at **Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA)**.

The Olympic inspired commentary accompanies riders as they zig and zag their way down the mountain through twists and turns designed by ADG track engineers that replicates the historic bobsled track along with a few additional 360-degree turns included into



Nestled in New York's Adirondack Mountains is the longest mountain coaster in North America: **Cliffside Coaster**. The ride intertwines with the Olympic Bobsled Run that was used for the 1932 and 1980 winter Olympics (above). One or two people can ride the 7,600 feet of track, during a more than eight-minute ride careening down the mountain at speeds up to 25 mph. The 240-passenger-per-hour mountain coaster debuted October 11. COURTESY ADG MOUNTAINSLIDES



the eight-minute ride.

"The coaster follows the alignment of the 1932 and 1980 Olympic bobsled track as it descends the mountain. The views are amazing, and the curves get your heart pounding," said ORDA President and CEO **Mike Pratt** in a release.

With speeds up to 25 mph possible and Olympic themed carts designed to seat two riders comfortably and match the look

and feel of a bobsled, the driver controls how slow or fast their cart goes down the mountain.

**Cliffside Coaster** has wider seats that can easily fit two adults or guests of all ages. The seatbelt design ensures that riders remain firmly and comfortably seated in the cart, even during high G-force turns.

The stainless steel construction accommodates any

twist and turn in the mountain terrain. ADG prefabricates their mountain coaster track system in-house. This modular design has a high ground-to-track clearance that adapts easily to changing weather conditions, without the hassle of snow removal.

"The **Cliffside Coaster** is one of our latest and most thrilling additions to the Olympic Regional Development

Authority venues, and part of our ongoing effort to modernize the entire Mt. Van Hoevenberg complex," said New York Governor **Andrew Cuomo**. "This revitalization is transforming the complex into a year-round provider of excitement and entertainment for both athletes and families, which will attract more summer visitors and provide a critical boost to local businesses as we work to build back better."

ADG Mountainsides is a division of **Aquatic Development Group, Inc.**

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### Cliffside Coaster by the numbers

- Uphill track: 2,400 feet
- Downhill track: 5,200 feet
- Total track: 7,600 feet
- Top speed: 25 mph
- Ride time: 8-9 minutes
- Capacity: 240 pph
- Number of sleds: 35
- Opening day:  
October 11, 2020





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# RES provides its compact Roller Ball coaster to Weiner Prater

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

VIENNA, Austria — **Weiner Prater** is an interesting fair-type facility. Other than the Wiener Riesenrad, the world-famous Ferris wheel that survived and was restored following World War II, all the other attractions are brought in by showmen, requiring that all attractions use purchased tickets.

In the history of the Prater, at least 40 roller coasters have operated on the property. One of its newest is Roller Ball, supplied by **Ride Engineers of Switzerland**. It is owned and operated by **Kern & Waldmann**. Nothing like this coaster has ever existed on the midway before. The compact nature of the ride has the entire track standing within a single vertical plane.

"We have been focusing on creating a ride with a very small footprint, combined with a stunning height," said RES Technical Director and Co-owner **Roman Rothe**. "This version raises up to 90 feet but has a footprint of only 50 by 21 feet. This includes a maintenance and safety rescue lift for going all the way to the top."

Only three such roller coast-

ers have been built, and this is the tallest version. A fourth is awaiting to open in 2021. All four installations are in Europe.

The very nature of the attraction takes typical roller coaster track and turns it 90 degrees. Vehicles are attached from the side rather than the traditional undercarriage.

"The ride has multiple experiences," said Rothe. "Highlights start at the lift hill. When the gondola travels up, the rider has a spectacular view over the surrounding area. Over the top, the first drop makes everyone scream, especially those who ride backward and can't see the drop coming."

The layout features a number of curving drops, which offer various sensations.

"While going down the structure, each rider is facing curving drops in the front as well as backward," Rothe told *Amusement Today*. "Each drop is a combination of freefall, an acceleration of speed and a swing of up to 90 degrees. You can be staring up at the sky or face down to the ground. Riders get to do the curves from opposite directions."

Track length is 117 meters (384 feet) and operates with three, 4-person vehicles.



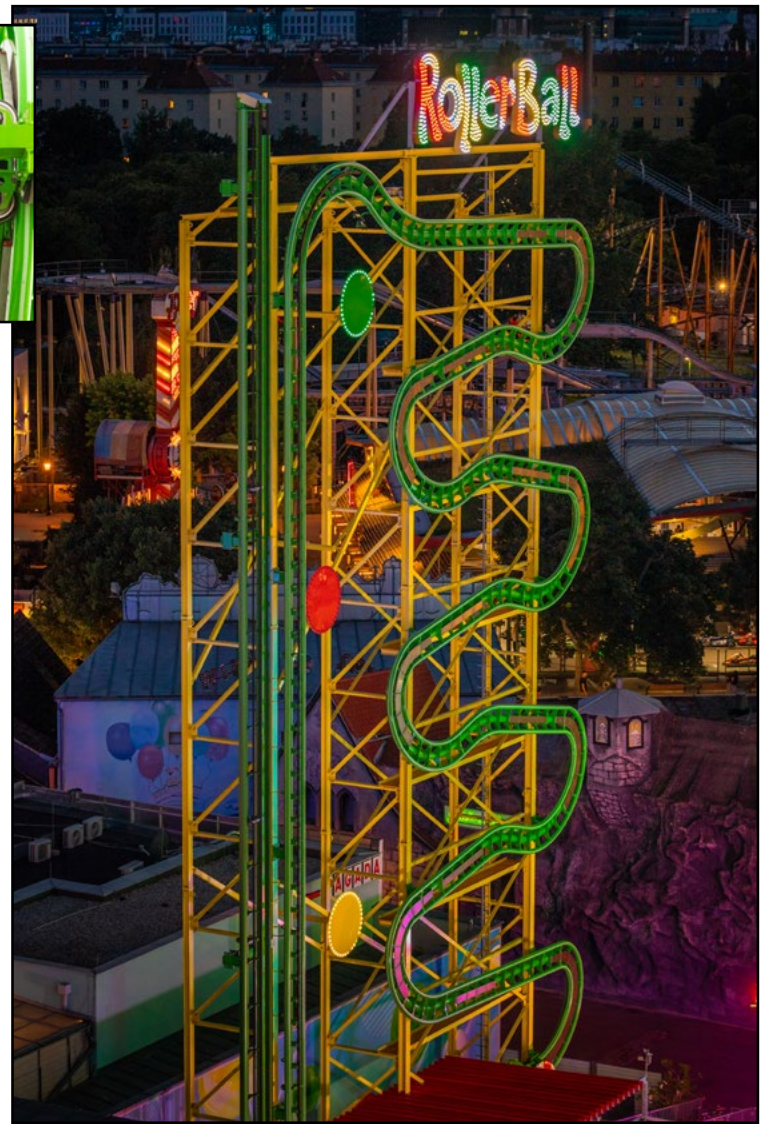
In a midway full of flash, Roller Ball has its name in dazzling lights close to 100 feet in the air (right). The unique back-to-back seating adds thrilling swing to both sides (inset).

COURTESY  
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Gondolas can be dispatched every 40 seconds for an hourly capacity of 320 people.

"The coaster also accommodates riders as small as children 42 inches tall. It serves a wide demographic," said **Gina Guglielmi**, president, **Intermark Ride Group**, which represents RES. "It's great for families."

According to Rothe, the ride took two to three weeks to erect and another one to two weeks to commission and gain TUV approval.



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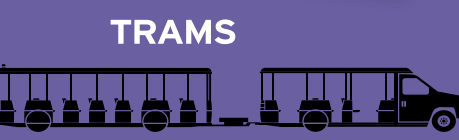
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## Sun sets on four classic attractions at Kennywood

WEST MIFFLIN, Pa. — **Kennywood** shocked local fans with an announcement on the park's Facebook page that when the park opens in Spring 2021, four of its rides will be gone.

The West Mifflin park shared the news on November 3 that the Kangaroo, Paratrooper, Bayern Kurve and the Volcano are being retired.

"Even in a National Historic Landmark, change is a constant at Kennywood," the park said in its post. "In the past three years, we've invested more in new attractions than at any previous point in the park's storied history. While these attractions have created countless special memories for our guests and team members over the years, we have determined the best path forward at this time is to say goodbye. We look forward to adding new attractions that create new moments to treasure in future years."

In less than an hour, the post on Facebook received more than 500 comments. Many fans said they were "disappointed" to see the four rides leave.

"Any time you are making decisions like this, it is very difficult," said park spokesman **Nick Paradise** to local media outlets. "But with what the industry is facing in this day and age, we are looking closely at everything. We have to balance history and tradition with economics and realities, and the reality is the parks have to make some hard decisions right now, like so many other businesses and families."

All of the disappearing rides are classics attractions of days gone by. Making the decision to remove the rides even more difficult, the Kangaroo is the last of its kind in operation. It was introduced in 1962. The Paratrooper was added in 1976 and the Volcano in 1978. The Bayern Kurve has come and gone several times. It was operating from 1994-2004 and then removed and brought back in 2009.

Eventually, the open spaces created by the ride removals will house new additions. However, until the current pandemic is over, the areas will be used for additional seating and landscaping.

Operating during the COVID-19 pandemic has already delayed the opening of the parks' **Steelers Experience** area, which was intended to open in 2020. The area was designed to be highly interactive and hands-on, realities that are just not possible under coronavirus protocols.

Sister facility **Idlewild & SoakZone** has also announced that it is retiring several attractions, including the Rainbow Wheel in Raccoon Lagoon, Bubbling Springs Ball Pit in Jumpin' Jungle, and the current Ferris Wheel in Olde Idlewild.



The Bayern Kurve (above) and Kangaroo (right) are among four classic rides being retired at Kennywood. The Kangaroo was the last of its kind still in operation.  
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# FAMILY SPINNING COASTER



# Lagotronics Projects stays on cutting edge of interactive technology

AT: Pam Sherborne  
psherborne@amusementtoday.com

VENLO, The Netherlands — The sky is the limit with **Lagotronics Projects** fourth-generation interactive system as the company begins to enter its 42nd year of operations.

Lagotronics takes pride in providing cutting-edge technology, while, at the same time, without using any lights, cameras, or other equipment, its products are extremely low maintenance and have many functionalities.

**Mark Beumers**, CEO of Lagotronics, said he believes his company has the best technology in the industry.

"We have been creating interactive experiences for over 40 years and during that time we have created what we feel is a standard, unlike any other, in the world of interactive technology," Beumers said. "We research, develop, assemble, and program all of our equipment in our headquarters in Venlo, The Netherlands. By doing



**Lagotronics Projects, a Netherlands interactive technology company, just completed a new project for Movie Park in Germany. The interactive experience takes place in the former location of the licensed attraction, "The Walking Dead Breakout."**

COURTESY LAGOTRONICS PROJECTS

so, we can be certain of a very high-standard of quality."

He said his equipment doesn't use any mechanical-wearing switches, cameras, lasers or other parts that need maintenance which prevents

them from simply wearing out.

"Instead, we use contactless sensors, encoders, and high-tech electronics for location detection and triggering," he said. "Although technology should be invisible in the back-

ground and is obviously less important than storytelling, using the right technology opens a stairway to opportunities and, eventually, success."

Lagotronics Projects was founded in 1979 by **Carlo**

**Gortjes**, who launched the company while he was still in college. He was president until early 2018, at which time the company was taken over by the management team. Gortjes has retained ownership.

At Lagotronics' beginnings, the company provided audio and lighting technology to small entertainment venues. This led to television broadcasts and incorporating interactive technology.

In 2000, Lagotronics was hired to create a dark ride at **Six Flags Mexico**, which was a significant step into the amusement industry. Since then, the company has designed and installed more than 100 projects around the globe.

Most of the company's in-house developed products are based on a point and trigger system, capable of triggering components such as targets, video screens, decorations and live actors. This is technology that can be used from a distance, enabling walk-through attractions, as well as vehicles, boats and towers to work with some kind of remote-controlled interactive feedback.

They can do this with and without devices that people have to operate. While they can work with fixed controllers such as handheld devices, touchscreens, buttons and levers, Lagotronics also has unique technology that is able to use people's gestures, motions, face recognition and voices.

The small circuit board technology used in the fourth generation development can be placed inside any device such as a magic wand, a gun, a vehicle and animatronic.

The technology knows exactly where the board is located and in which direction it is pointed. By feeding this information into a game computer as well as using it in a virtual 3D environment, Lagotronics officials feel the sky really is the limit in what they can do with interactives.

Parks can work with targets and media screens as well as with moving targets, targets that can change randomly, or at an hourly or daily rate and even live actors. It is even capable of working with augmented reality glasses to provide an extra interactive layer in any attraction.

Beumers said the company is especially proud of a recent project they completed at **Mov-**

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► See **PROJECTS**, page 25



## ►PROJECTS

Continued from page 24

ie Park in Germany. The interactive experience takes place in the former location of the licensed attraction, "The Walking Dead Breakout."

"In this existing building, we designed and developed a unique and innovative interactive walkthrough attraction using our newest technology," Beumers said. "This walkthrough is so special because it uses live actors, a ghost, along with our custom-made interactive system."

"The live actors and the ghost optimize the experience by generating excitement and entertainment," he said. "This attraction uses both bespoke and innovative interactive systems."

Lagotronics designed and developed a custom shooter for this walkthrough. The shooter is wireless, battery-operated, lightweight and has an ergonomic design. There also are new features included in the software to enable use in a walk-through attraction with the many changing goals in the scenes.

"Two types of targets have been implemented, ghost projections and hidden targets," Beumers said.

"The ghost projections appear throughout the walk-through. The hidden targets are clues that can eventually unravel the riddle. Smell and sound effects ensure that visitors are fully immersed in the storyline. With each hidden hint revealed, visitors are one step closer to unraveling the secret."

A scoring system was developed that tracks each individual score. For every target that is hit, the visitors get points with the high scores displayed on a large screen at the end of the attraction.

Beumers said Lagotronics is able to provide a full package to clients with its array of skilled employees. The company can provide marketing and sales, project management, software and hardware development, game development, engineering (drawings and designs), purchasing and transportation, production and assembly and full-installation and training worldwide with our own people.

There is a Lagotronics sales and project-management office in Shanghai and a sister company in the Philippines.

Lagotronics is represented in North America by Ed Hiller of Ride Entertainment.

•lagotronicsprojects.com

## Ride Entertainment Group, NewcoUSA partner

STEVENSVILLE, Md. — Ride Entertainment's Maintenance & Installation Division (RMI) has installed and worked on roller coaster projects around the world including many record-breaking attractions. In doing so, the RMI team has built a reputation within the attractions industry as leaders in providing high-quality ride installations, ride maintenance and project management. Partnering with NewcoUSA was a natural fit for Ride Entertainment, with both companies exhibiting a commitment to quality craftsmanship and customer satisfaction.

"Newco's ability to offer replacement wheels that are an entirely new wheel including the hub at a price competitive to the price of a relined wheel is what sets them apart," says RMI Project Manager Amanda Mercado. "Relined wheels do not always perform at the same level as a new wheel. This new approach will save time and money for maintenance teams in the industry. We are all excited to be a part of delivering this product to the industry and we think there is a lot of value in what Newco can do both with replacement wheels and engineering new solutions."

NewcoUSA has built a reputation in precision engineering and application of polyurethane wheels for roller coasters, including a variety of industrial solutions, for more than two decades. NewcoUSA views the Räder Vogel wheel as a near perfect product.

Räder Vogel wheels have been the high-performance standard for more than 70 years and counting. From the elimination of vibrations (due to Räder Vogel proprietary lamination process) to eliminating excessive rolling noise, Räder Vogel wheels are a proven solution for today's amusement parks. Räder Vogel's wheels are non-marking, have low starting and rolling resistances as well as good chemical resistance



Ride Entertainment Group will partner with NewcoUSA to distribute its Räder Vogel wheel throughout the amusement industry. COURTESY RIDE ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

to mineral oils, greases and various solvents. The wheels have a load capacity of more than 55,000 pounds. Thanks to the wheels' resistance to environmental effects, they are used for roller coasters, machines, work platforms, transport trolleys, assembly trolleys, storage trolleys and container wagons.

The partnership of Ride Entertainment and NewcoUSA will enable the distribution of the Räder Vogel wheels to amusement facilities throughout North America with the goal to provide customers with multiple wheel solutions. Newco will be able to provide high-quality, maintenance-friendly replacement wheels and new engineered wheel solutions to solve existing wheel failure issues. Newco's innovative approach and dedicated quality control staff makes the company's wheels a cost-effective solution.

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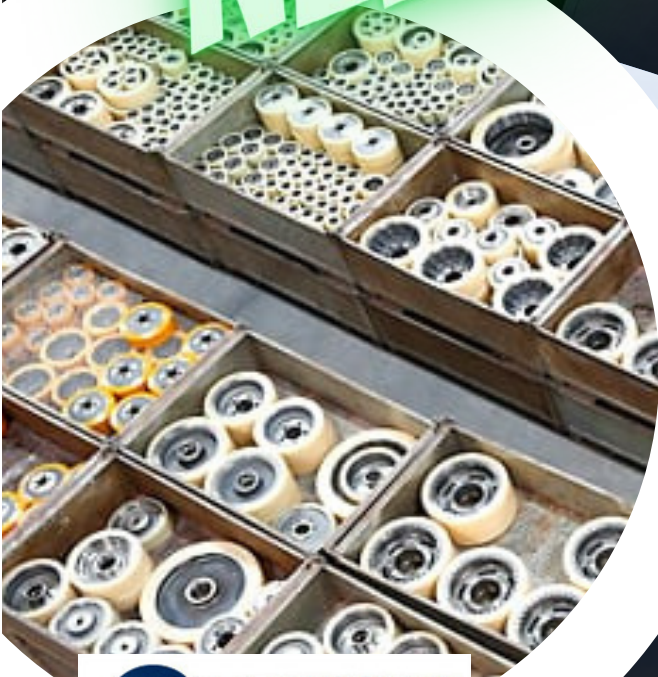
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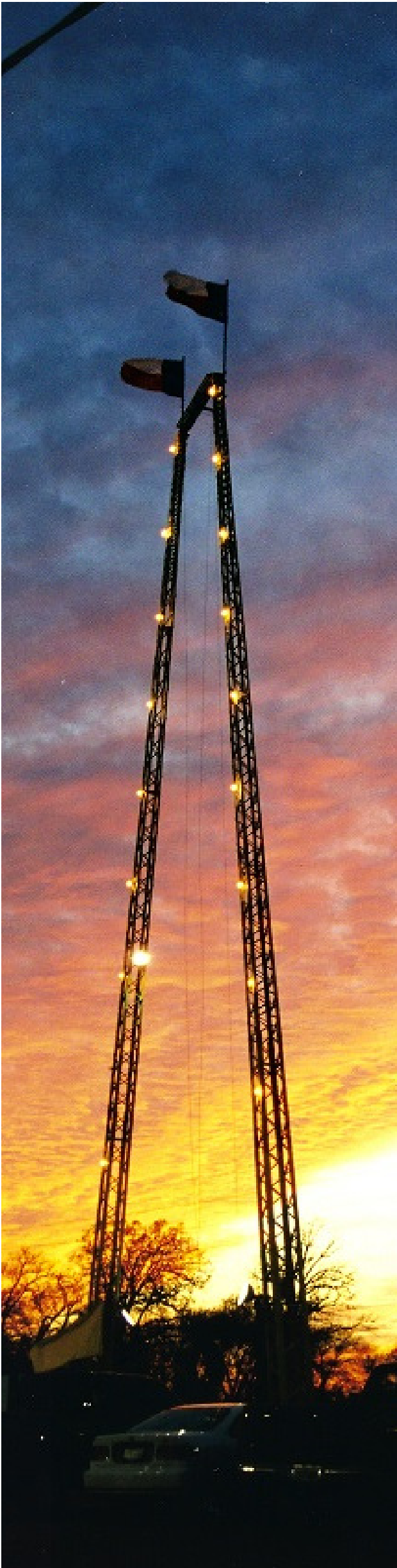


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# Skywarp Orbit offers big thrills in small size, single train option



Face-to-face, single train operation allows Skyline Attractions' Skywarp Orbit to retain the original rides unique thrills while significantly reducing cost. COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS, LLC



ORLANDO — Skyline Attractions continues to innovate its lineup of thrill rides with the newest iteration of Skywarp Orbit, now with the option of single train operation.

Skywarp Orbit already combines two of the features that thrill seekers crave — negative G's on a banked airtime hill and sustained hangtime in a cutback inversion. Not only do riders get to experience both of these thrilling elements multiple times as the train snakes around the oval-shaped track, but riders also get the thrill of riding it forward or backward, thanks to Skywarp Orbit's unique face-to-face seating.

With the new option of single train operation, Skywarp Orbit retains these exciting elements and electrifying visuals, now at a lower price tag! Skywarp Orbit with one train operation is available at a reduced upfront cost, in addition to reduced operation and maintenance commitments over the ride's lifetime. The combination is a tantalizing offer when com-

## Skywarp Orbit, now with single train operation!



Watch it now!  
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pared with other attractions currently in the marketplace.

"With its small footprint, the ride can fit into many places that a traditional roller coaster cannot, and its height allows for Skywarp Orbit to be built indoors. This compact size, paired with the low price tag and high thrills, makes Skywarp Orbit the perfect addition to any amusement park or family entertainment center," said Skyline President Jeff Pike.

Skywarp Orbit was originally added to Skyline's diverse collection of unique rides and attractions last November, following the successful debut of Skywarp Horizon at SeaWorld San Diego in May 2019. The California installation incorporated numerous design upgrades that enhanced the experience for park goers and maintenance staff alike:

► See SKYWARP, page 29

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## ► SKYWARP

Continued from page 28

an updated track design that significantly minimized ride noise and improved ride quality, a new bogie design that allowed for a smoother ride experience and less maintenance, and an overhauled mechanical drive system which prioritized easy access for park technicians. All of these improvements are incorporated into Skywarp Orbit.

Skyline Attractions has also been keeping busy with its design services for parks and other ride manufacturers. Skyline has partnered with **Great Coasters International, Inc.**, to provide the design and engineering that brought Texas Stingray at **SeaWorld San Antonio** to life, in addition to the wooden roller coaster company's new Infinity Flyers train design and Titan Track steel track design. Skyline has also collaborated with major theme park companies in the Orlando area and across the country. The team eagerly looks forward to working with parks in structural and

Unique theming such as the "Barnstomer" design (pictured) is available for the Skywarp Orbit, elevating the compact thrill ride to a spectacular centerpiece attraction for any midway. COURTESY SKYLINE ATTRACTIONS, LLC

mechanical design and engineering, sign-off and certification, aesthetic and ergonomic design, digital media, photo-realistic models, and custom industry solutions.

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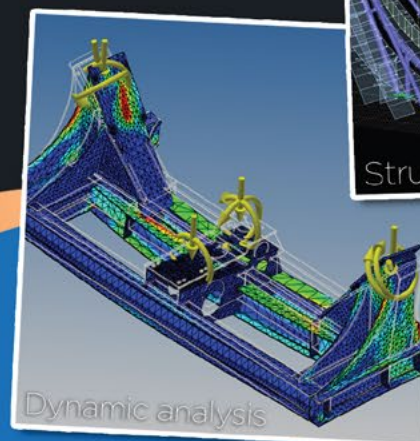
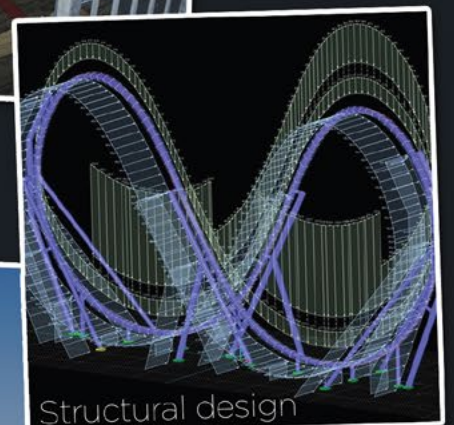
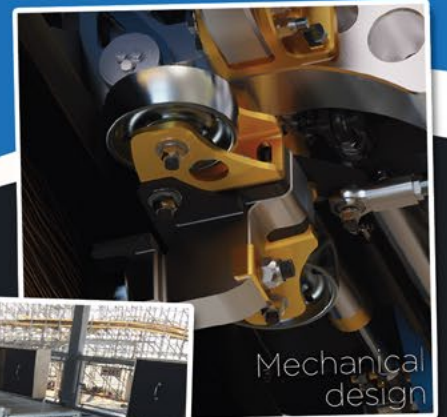
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California's oldest amusement park, **Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk**, Santa Cruz, was preparing at the end of October to become the first amusement park to reopen under the state's new COVID-19 health and safety guidelines following a seven-month coronavirus closure.

The 1907 facility opened to the public on November 7. Santa Cruz County moved into the orange/moderate tier 3 risk level under **Governor Gavin Newsom's** Blueprint for a Safer Economy.

California issued separate reopening guidelines for small and large theme parks at the end of October. Small theme parks with a capacity of less than 15,000 visitors can reopen in the orange/moderate tier 3 while large theme parks can return in the yellow/minimal tier 4, which could leave major players like **Disney** and **Universal** unable to return until early 2021 or next summer.

Smaller theme parks can reopen at 25% capacity or 500 in-county visitors, whichever is fewer, with admission by reservation only in the orange/moderate tier 3.

Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk isn't the only California amusement park permitted to reopen right now under the state's guidelines. The **Small World Park** and **Pixieland** amusement parks in Contra Costa County could also reopen.

The Beach Boardwalk plans to reopen in off-season mode with eight to 12 rides, about a third of the park's 37 amusement rides, according to Marq Lipton of Santa Cruz Beach Boardwalk.

**Walt Disney World Resort**, Orlando, Florida, officials have announced a brand new opportunity for Disney fanatics to show off being a Disney enthusiast and help grant wishes for children who need them all at the same time.

For the first time ever, a specialty Walt Disney World Resort license plate is available for purchase in honor of the park's 50th anniversary. All proceeds of

the license plate will go to **Make-A-Wish of Central and Northern Florida**.

Disney has a long-standing relationship with Make-A-Wish dating back to 1980, and since then, more than 140,000 Disney-inspired wishes have been granted, with more than 8,000 taking place each year at Walt Disney World Resort.

The design of this specialty plate will be revealed at a later date. Interested car owners can purchase a pre-sale voucher now for \$25 plus applicable state administration fees through local County Tax Collector's offices and license plate agencies (DMVs) across Florida.

More information about the 50th anniversary celebration will be available in the months to come.

Employees began winterizing **Deno's Wonder Wheel Park** on Coney Island in New York earlier than usual, according to a local news agency.

*Spectrum News New York* spoke with **Deno Vourderis**, whose grandfather of the same name bought the Coney Island Wonder Wheel in 1983.

The park wasn't allowed to open this year due to

the COVID-19 pandemic. Hopes are that the park will be on a regular schedule in 2021.

Until then, they are working on their winterization checklist including sealing wood, mending fences and painting the landmark Ferris wheel.

Vourderis told the news agency that 2020 was very stressful trying to stay ready to open at any point.

**Funland**, Idaho Falls, Idaho, is ready for its make-over. One year after being purchased by the City of Idaho Falls, officials have created the **Funland Restoration Committee** to take on revitalizing the amusement park.

The plan is to have a soft opening of Funland in the summer of 2021. The grand opening is set for the summer of 2022, which will be Funland's 75th anniversary.

**Dana Kirkham**, former Ammon mayor and former CEO of the **Regional Economic Development** for Eastern Idaho, is spearheading the project. Seven others will be part of Kirkham's Funland committee.

This year was the first summer that Funland has been closed since 1947. The city is using this time to evaluate what aspects of Funland will stay, what will go and what will be updated.

Kirkham told the city council in August: "At this point in time, we're saving everything. If there's some historical meaning or some connection to it and there's some way that we can use it, we will do that... There's everything still at Funland, right down to the urinals. Everything is right there and original."

The park was purchased by the city for \$140,000. There has been \$40,000 set aside for renovations.

One of the biggest changes Kirkham wants to make is to attach Funland to the **Idaho Falls Zoo**. She envisions a joint entrance that leads to both Funland and the zoo. Visitors will be able to buy joint passes to both.

Miniature golf will be coming back bigger and better, though in a different location.



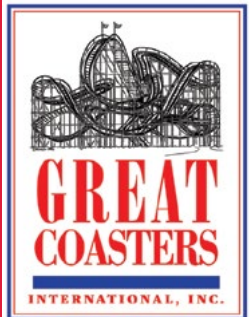
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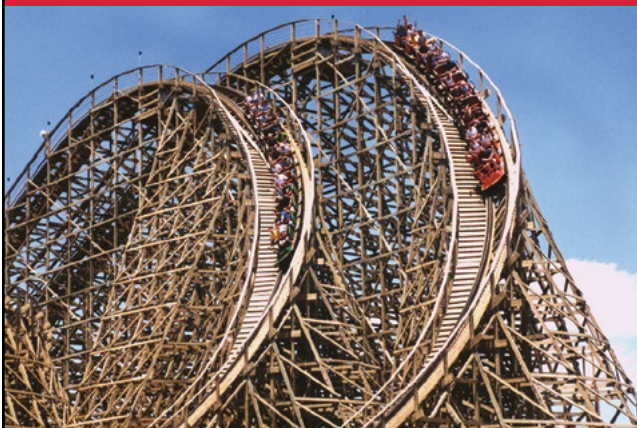
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# Huish expertise guides family fun centers through 2020 challenges

AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA — It's a shared observation that the amusement industry — in all its facets — could never have predicted the endless cycle of unexpected developments 2020 would have dealt businesses when the year began. One of the largest segments of the industry is family entertainment centers. With primarily indoor locations and multiple touch surfaces, facilities had to rethink, reimagine and react quickly to reopen. If they could reopen, that is. Regulations vary from state to state, creating a tangled web of obstacles and snafus.

Over several decades, the **Huish family** has developed numerous properties under various brands ranging from miniature golf courses to family entertainment centers to water parks and more. In time, some of the family's properties were sold to **Palace Entertainment**, and from there, other owners would come and go.

"They were originally owned by my family, but when we sold to others, we only sold the assets, so we retained the land ownership," said **Shane Huish**, managing partner. "When it went from owner to



The Huish family wants to bring back the family brand that people grew up with and deliver a quality product. Miniature golf was the Huish family's first foray into the family entertainment business. COURTESY FAMILY FUN CENTER

owner, it was only the assets that were handed over. We continued to receive payments from those companies."

Huish credits his father as being a pioneer in the FEC market.

"My dad originated the family entertainment center concept," said Huish. "He originally started with miniature golf courses, then they slowly started adding go-kart tracks, baseball batting cages and bumper boats to their parks. That kind of created



Huish

the family entertainment center industry. They developed in Southern California and then started spreading throughout the country. We were originally called **Family Fun Center**."

Although the family attached its name to the parks, Huish chuckled that people often didn't know how to pronounce the name, so they instead placed the city location in front of the Family Fun Center name to give it identity.

At one point, Huish estimates the family operated as many as 10 properties in Southern California. Along the way, some properties were managed by operators such as **Palace**, **Boomers** and **Apex**.



Honoring non-compete clauses in California following those deals, the family ventured to northern states and opened centers in Oregon and Washington. In those ventures, they acquired the rights to cartoon characters **Rocky** and **Bullwinkle** and those properties in Portland and Seattle operate under the name **Bullwinkle's**. Those entertainment centers offer bowling in addition to miniature golf, as well as dining and cocktails.

With the spring bankruptcy of **Apex**, four of the Southern California properties were reclaimed by the Huish family in June. In the midst of heavy state restrictions, the family then began its steps to redevel-

op each property. "Apex was thriving under **Al Weber's** [leadership]," said Huish. "Following his death, we saw revenue and lease payments decline."

He credits his father for being instrumental in forcing the operators to adhere to lease requirements when it came to landscaping and maintenance and reinvestment. Eventually the operators couldn't keep up.

Now questions of how to move forward come into play. Huish says the Fountain Valley property is actually located where the land value is just too great to logically continue to

► See **HUIH**, page 33



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## ►HUISH

### Continued from page 32

operate as an FEC.

"We have a vision for each property, but it is a little bit blurred with COVID," he said.

The first park to reopen was in San Diego. When Boomers left the facilities, of the four properties, San Diego suffered the least amount of damage as the assets were removed. Repairs and refurbishment were made in time for the park to reopen on Labor Day.

"We are working on rebuilding our name and the reputation of the park," Huish said. "In California, we are under extreme regulations, so we've only been able to open our outdoor attractions. Restaurants and arcades are still closed."

While evaluating the other properties, the family is still heavily involved in operating other facilities in the industry, including the FECs in Washington and Oregon,

as well as the Cowabunga Bay water parks in Nevada and Utah.

"As we continue to see how COVID opens up in 2021, we'll determine the amount of investment to put back into the [other] parks. It would be our hope to bring the parks up to 2021 standards and give them added new attractions, updated facilities and the latest technology — that's our goal," he said.

Upland and El Cajon are the other locations. The family is in an evaluation phase with the San Diego park to see how to move forward with other locations but admits that things need to improve with the health crisis for any forward momentum to really occur.

"Each park is different. We saw a lot of interest in our water parks. We actually had good years. I don't think people were afraid to be outside and be in the water and be spread out over 15 acres," Huish said. "We didn't take

**Outdoor attractions were permitted to open within California's guidelines.**

COURTESY  
FAMILY FUN CENTER

the hit we saw in the FECs where we had things indoors like bowling and restaurants."

Operating multiple brands is not a problem for the family. Huish gives nod to the success of the Cowabunga Bay water park brand as well as the FECs in operation in Oregon and Washington.

"In the California area, I think we're going to bring back the family branding. That's the name people grew up with, so they'll recognize the name Family Fun Center. That's the branding we hope to continue with down there," he said.

With decades of expertise, the family has a wealth of knowledge from which to approach decisions. When faced with the rippling impacts of a global crisis, solutions aren't always at a



moment's notice. It's apparent that a "wait and see" approach might determine the outcome, even if those results may seem harsh. With goals for each property in view, light at the end of the tunnel in upcoming months

might deliver the outcome the family is hoping for.

"Every day is different," said Huish. "It's not only every day that changes, but within every aspect of the industry as well."



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# Redemption Plus launches FEC rebuilding campaign



New products and updated displays highlight Redemption Plus's rebuilding solutions plan. COURTESY REDEMPTION PLUS

LENEXA, Kan. — **Redemption Plus** created a four-part plan to assist bowling and family entertainment centers from now and into the start of 2021. The plan, titled *Rebuilding Redemption*, consists of both prize and customer support solutions to give businesses valuable tools to promote performance recovery.

As the economy continues to recover from nationwide shutdowns, families are reevaluating how they spend their discretionary income. Through Redemption Plus's temporary empathetic pricing model, family entertainment centers will be able to promote a "spend less, win more" approach to arcade game and redemption programs. Passing on the savings to the end-user will allow for a higher return on investment in the game room and promoting a positive guest experience.

## Continuation of helping customers create profitable redemption spaces

Redemption Plus will continue to offer service packages, custom design, merchandising assistance and customer support. Helping family and bowling entertainment centers run profitable redemption programs is at the core of its business and is more important than ever in a post-pandemic environment.

As part of the *Rebuilding Redemption* campaign, the company built a *Reopening Toolkit* that includes cleanliness tips, marketing suggestions and other problem-solving techniques to help family and bowling entertainment centers restart their redemption programs. The company also continues to evaluate its product line through item performance and customer feedback to match post-COVID trends.

## New Prizes and Themes

The last six months granted the company time to understand where it could expand its product line. Redemption Plus customers will enjoy shopping through more than 200 new items arriving through the end of 2020. These items are part of both new and existing prize themes for the Redemption Plus line.

This is the first major line expansion for Redemption Plus in several years. After focusing on how to keep high-moving import items in stock and always available over the last three years, the company is now able to expand to the same philosophy for domestic and licensed items. This allows us to be a more cohesive prize solution for our customers' redemption needs.

## Expanded Storyboards Offerings

Redemption Plus's product team organized the new products into more than 10 new Storyboard offerings, including themes such as Rock Band, Under the Sea and Fashionista. The company also updated its existing Storyboards with new and refreshed prizes as well. Customers can shop all Storyboards offerings at the company's website.

As many centers have experienced turnover and consolidated operations, Storyboards are a way to easily update redemption displays with limited existing knowledge of how best to do so.

With many businesses still working through spring break inventory, this gives new and updated options for the end-user going into the holiday season and next year.

## Discounted pricing

These efforts come to a culmination of a 10% off promotion for Redemption Plus customers throughout the rest of 2020. Customers can redeem 10% off purchases by using code **REDEMPTIONRELIEF** at checkout. With many businesses operating on limited budgets, the pricing discount allows centers to update redemption prizes at a lower overall cost.

• [redemptionplus.com](http://redemptionplus.com)



## FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

AT: John W.C. Robinson

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Georgia-based family entertainment center, **Stars and Strikes** recently opened its new Concord, North Carolina, location on October 19. It is the 15th location for the company.

The Concord location is Stars and Strikes' second in the state of North Carolina. The company has invested over \$7 million in the new facility, creating more than 100 jobs.

The 58,000-square-foot facility houses 24 bowling lanes, eight of which are VIP lanes in the brand-new S&S Lounge. The VIP lanes provide an intimate space for added privacy and the lounge offers an atmosphere where adults can unwind and connect with one another. In addition to bowling, Stars and Strikes features a 10,000-square-foot arcade that houses more than 100 virtual reality, video and redemption games. The facility includes a brand-new, two-story LED laser tag arena, bumper cars and a large full-service bar surrounded by big-screen TVs for sports viewing. The Concord location also features CJ's Tavern, where guests can take a break from the action to enjoy chef-crafted cuisine or an award-winning cocktail.

"We're excited to bring the Stars and Strikes concept to Cabarrus County and the surrounding area, and provide family-focused entertainment that guests of any age can enjoy," said **Chris Albano**, managing partner and co-founder of Stars and Strikes.

**Monster Mini Golf** has opened its latest location at Ridge Hill in Yonkers, New York. An indoor family entertainment center, Monster Mini Golf includes an 18-hole glow-in-the-dark mini golf course as well as bowling, an arcade and event rooms.

"It's fulfilling to provide families and friends from surrounding communities with a super fun, safe, socially distanced and affordable entertainment option for all ages," said franchisee owner **Nick Mastrandrea**.

"Ridge Hill is thrilled to welcome another new entertainment option for local family fun that can be enjoyed all year long," said Ridge Hill's property marketing manager **Meghann Hongach**. The new location officially opened Oct. 10.

Multi-unit family entertainment center operator **Bethanne Mashburn** opened bowling entertainment center **The Alley** this month in Gadsden, Alabama. The new FEC features cashless technology from **Intercard**.

The center marks the first featuring cashless technology for Mashburn, which already has two FEC/trampoline parks in Alabama under the name **The Factory**.

The Alley will occupy 35,000-square-feet of a former Sears store that has been converted into a contemporary entertainment complex in the revitalized Gadsden Mall. Amenities include 18 lanes of boutique-style bowling, an arcade with 45 games and a redemption store, a **Hologate** VR attraction, private party rooms and a full-service restaurant and bar.

Intercard's cashless technology system will handle payment for all attractions as well as the food and beverage operation.

In late October, Peosta City Council members approved a development agreement with the owners of **Round 2**.

The new family entertainment center, featuring a bowling alley, is slated to open the day before Thanksgiving.

The project will receive tax-increment financing benefits and could garner up to \$440,000 during the 15-year agreement. This financing method incentivizes property owners to improve or renovate their buildings by giving them back a portion of the increased property taxes they would have incurred as a result of the improvements.

"The council took a tour a couple weeks ago, and it looks fantastic," said City Administrator **Whitney Baethke**. "It will be pretty huge for us. We don't have a lot of entertainment out here."

Round 2 is being built by owners **Dave** and **Tracie Pettera**. The 17,500-square-foot facility will feature 12 bowling lanes, an arcade, bar, dining area and outdoor patio.

**District 850**, a next-generation entertainment and dining venue, opened its doors in November. The 45,000-square-foot bowling-anchored venue, located in Northeast Tallahassee, Florida, will set a new standard for the area by combining a premium dining experience with a dynamic portfolio of interactive and immersive attractions.

Developer **Nilesh Patel** selected industry consultant **Amusement Entertainment Management** to spearhead the project's development, including the formulation of the business case, investment strategy, and coordination plan.

The three-year undertaking included the ground-up construction of the facility, which has been designed to support family, adult, and corporate users with generous private event, conference and lounge areas.

In September, fire ravaged **Skate Tiffany's** in Puyallup, Washington. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but the iconic community skating rink and other indoor attractions were devastated.

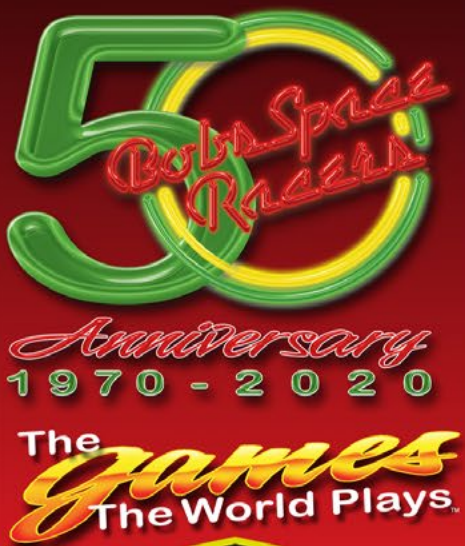
Owners **Dennis** and **Melinda King** put out a call to the community for help with the clean-up. **Intercard** sales rep **Amber Lambert** lives nearby, and she and her family volunteered to spend a Saturday morning cleaning up smoke-damaged roller skates at the popular roller rink and FEC.

"Intercard's customers are part of a global family, and family helps out in times of need," said Lambert. "I also toured the facility and saw the damage done by the fire, including the destruction of their computer servers and arcade games. They were a total loss."

Thanks to Intercard's use of data storage in a secure cloud environment, the Kings did not lose any of their business data despite the destruction of their computer servers. "Intercard had all their point-of-sale data backed up," said Lambert. "This has made it possible to retrieve data and get access to the financial reporting they need for their insurance claim."



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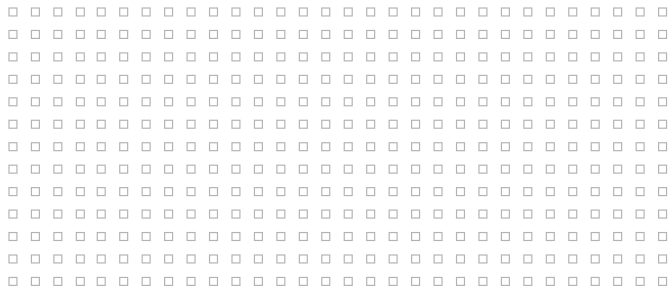
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# Mississippi State Fair hampered by hurricane, extends 2020 run

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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JACKSON, Miss. – A four day extension of the **Mississippi State Fair** helped organizers salvage the 2020 event, generating additional patrons, as they lost the first weekend with a hurricane that passed through the area.

**Greg “Scooter” Korek** vice president of client services for **North American Midway Entertainment**, the midway provider, offered a timeline breakdown. “The first couple of days were nice, then Hurricane Delta impacted the weekend, with rain and moderate wind. Monday through Thursday were reasonably well attended with some decreases mostly due to the pandemic. The last weekend was good and a strong turn-out for the Friday night midnight madness promotion. The extended four day event was okay, except [the last] Friday night which was rained out. All-in-all better than what we expected.”

Originally slated to run October 7-18, the fair was extended four additional days, October 22-25, making it a 16-day event. “Due to the constraints of COVID-19, Hurricane Delta, and other difficult weather, we experienced a 38% decline in the attendance. However, under the circumstances, we are satisfied with the results, and we are looking forward to next year,” said **Andy Gipson**, commissioner, **Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce**. Paid attendance was 62% less than the 2019 fair, coming in at just over 123,000.

NAME brought in 58 rides, of which 25 were kiddie ones, along with 46 game joints and 16 food stands. Rides new to this fair were **Mach 3 (KMG)**, **Star Dancer (Technical Park)** and **Dragon Coaster (Jung Max)**. The top three grossing rides were the **Sky Ride (Glenn Bergethon)**, **Crazy Mouse roller coaster (Zamperla)**, and **Bullet Train (Interpark)**. Korek would not provide ride midway revenue totals. He would only say, “We did okay. It performed above our expectations.”

NAME promoted a long-time employee to COVID-19 director. He made sure all staff members knew what the company was trying to accomplish. By developing good procedures, monitoring them every day and sticking to them. “Then your standard doesn’t fall down,” said Korek.

He went on to explain their pandemic program. “We employed a very extensive program of masks for all staff: sanitizing between rides; social distanc-



**The 2020 Mississippi State Fair was extended four days due to the effects of Hurricane Delta during the early days of the fair. Attendance at the 161st consecutive running fair was down 38%. NAME brought in 58 rides, of which 25 were kiddie ones. It also had 46 game joints and 16 food stands. Mach 3, Star Dancer and Dragon Coaster were at the fair for the first time. There were no fair-related outbreaks of COVID-19.**  
COURTESY NAME

ing markers at all rides, games and food; extensive staff training; temperature checks for all staff before start of their shift along with numerous hand sanitizing stations throughout the midway and fair grounds. We also had Plexiglas barriers installed.”

Ride lines were sectioned off away from the midway to cut down on congestion and crowding. Rides, events and food vendors were also denoted with six-foot social distancing markers.

The fairgrounds also had pandemic procedures in place. “We had to plan months in advance working with the Governor’s Office, as well as state health officials, to develop a safe fair plan. With changing conditions and executive orders, the plan details evolved, but the basis of the framework remained unchanged,” said Gipson.

When asked about their experience with NAME, Gipson said, “We have always had an excellent partnership with North American Midway Entertainment. We look forward to continuing that relationship.”

The admiration was mutual.



[The Mississippi State Fair is] “well organized and they provide a great fair experience with deep seeded community ties,” said Korek.

In addition to the fact that this was one of the few state fairs to operate this season, Gipson explained another factor that sets this fair apart from others: “We offer a long-standing tradition that is unique to our state fair, the Biscuit Booth. Each year, employees of the Mississippi Department of Agriculture and Commerce make homemade biscuits on-site at the fair and give them out to fairgoers at no charge. Fairgoers can watch biscuits being made from scratch and then eat a hot biscuit with **Blackburn’s** syrup on it. For many, coming to the Biscuit Booth is a treasured memory from childhood, and today, they bring their children to the Biscuit Booth.”

There were numerous ride specials offered throughout the fair along with a First

Responders and Healthcare Workers Appreciation Day, when they were offered free admission into the fair. This year they substituted Senior Day with an All-American Day. During this event, several musical acts performed on the main stage singing patriotic songs during lunch hours. That day was complemented with free admission to any active military. During the four extended days, a Facebook contest was implemented, providing the opportunity to be a VIP for the day. The winner won two free fair passes, free parking, two all-day ride passes, two hours of escorted front of the line access to rides, \$40 of free food and 30 minutes of free games.

**Michael Lasseter**, acting director of the **Mississippi State Fairgrounds** discussed their media mix. “We used television, radio, print advertising and social media to reach our guests. This year we inserted thousands of our Fair Fun Guide into a local print publication that were

delivered to homes of those in the area.” Lasseter added, “We had four nights of national acts as well as local acts every night. National entertainment included: **Roots and Boots- Sammy Kershaw, Aaron Tippin and Collin Raye, Great White and Slaughter, Sean Kingston, and the Gaither Vocal Band.**”

The last act was secured for the extended run days. This was their first performance since March, prior to COVID-19.

Gipson summed things up: “This was the 161st Mississippi State Fair, which has never been canceled. COVID-19 prescribed unprecedented challenges, and we are very pleased that we held a safe, responsible and healthy state fair. We didn’t have any fair-related outbreaks. We hope COVID makes its exit as we look toward 2021, but we have established a safe fair plan that will enable us to move forward, regardless.”

The 2021 edition is scheduled to take place October 6-17.

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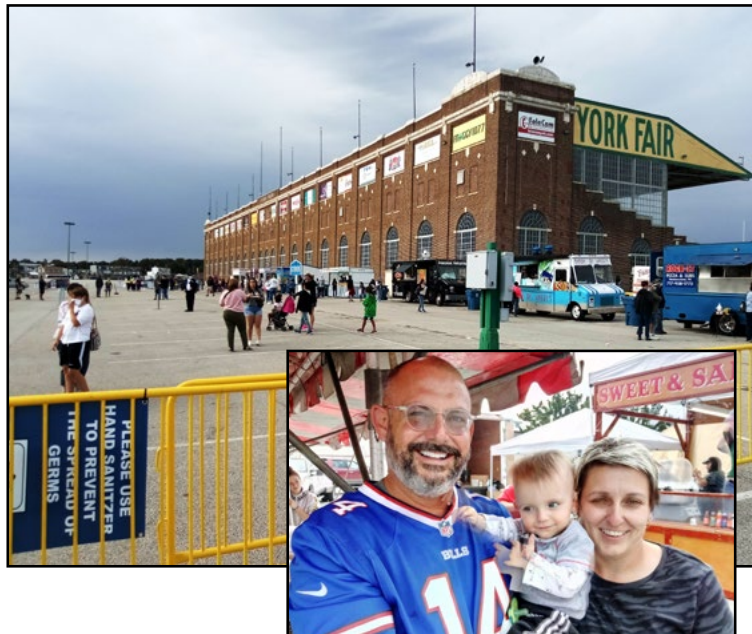
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# Food festival for York, Pa.



The first four days of October showcased a new event for the York, Pa. State Fair — a food festival. Since the newly renamed fair (formerly York Fair) was not held in late July, organizers wanted to capture part of the essence of any fair — the food. A total of 22 vendors participated. These vendors and their food selection are some of the fairgoer favorites each year during the 10-day run. Taking a needed break from their busy operation are Vince Martino, grandson Luca Martino, and Gretchen Santillo Martino (inset). The one-year-old is getting started early in the business. A second edition, dubbed, "Spooktacular York State Fair Food Festival" took place for four days over Halloween weekend. AT/ B. DEREK SHAW

## Lyrical fair history



YORK, Pa. — *Amusement Today* staffer B. Derek Shaw is a big record collector. Recently he came across a 45 RPM single called, "Fairtime U.S.A." by Hal Southern with the Frontiersmen and Joanie. The 1:35 song, originally released in 1963, is pop sounding featuring a barker conversing with a little girl about all the aspects of the fair. Part of the lyrics say, "It's fair time, happy fun time, fair time U.S.A. It's family time, it's happy time, as you stroll the gay midway." Although recorded two years prior, the group premiered the record at the 1965 Western Fairs Association convention at the Fresno Hacienda, November 15-18, Fresno, California. The 45 jacket photo is believed to be of Royal American Shows at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson, early 1960s. Prominent in the photo are the Velare Brothers Seattle Wheel and Space Wheels (double Sky Wheels). AT/B. DEREK SHAW



## MIDWAYSCENE

AT: B. Derek Shaw

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**Brass Ring Amusement's Midway of Fun** Ferris wheel recently rolled into the **Old Sacramento Waterfront District**, offering a fun new way to see the California city.

"I've been talking about putting a Ferris wheel on the waterfront for over two decades, but the timing was just never right," said **Harvey Mason**, owner of the carnival company in an interview with **The City**. "The perfect opportunity came when **Scott [Ford]**, operations manager for the historic district] said he was looking for a way to reimagine the holiday season in light of pandemic restrictions."

Dubbed the Waterfront Wheel, the 65-foot attraction allows people in the same household to safely share a gondola, while remaining physically distanced from strangers. Ferris wheel operators sanitize each gondola between rides, maintaining COVID-19 protocols.

The wheel runs daily through Jan. 31. The cost is \$6 per rider. All riders must be at least 42 inches in height. \$6 per rider.

**Hurricane Zeta** wreaked havoc as it blew through the southeastern United States. The 11-day **Pensacola Interstate Fair** was closed October 28 due to the high winds and water from the category 2 storm that produced 90 mph winds. **Reithoffer Shows** had the spot. The fair posted on the Reithoffer facebook page: "We were closed on Wednesday and the storm did cause some minor damages, but thanks to storm preparations and hard work today we cleaned up, fixed up and opened up. Thank you Team Reithoffer!"

The same hurricane forced the **Greater Gulf State Fair** in Mobile, Alabama, to open, October 31, a day later than normal. This was done for safety considerations. Hurricane Zeta came across the Gulf of Mexico and made landfall in Louisiana as a category one on Wednesday, October 28th. **NAME** delayed their set up plans by one day, to prepare for the hurricane and a staff evacuation plan. **Greg "Scooter" Korek** explained, "Zeta arrived in Mobile at 6:30pm on October 28 as a tropical storm bringing winds of 50 mph and gusts of over 90 mph. The fast moving tropical storm was through our area by 11:00 pm. We sustained very minimal damage and everyone was safe and accounted for. We set up the midway on Thursday and Friday for a successful and well attended opening on Saturday, October 31."

**Dallas City Council** recently approved a master plan that would bring a public park to the historic, 277-acre **Fair Park**. Home to the **State Fair of Texas** and **Cotton Bowl Stadium**, city officials allocated \$34.5 million in 2018 for **Spectra** and **Fair Park First** to manage the park. The two organizations would oversee the park for the first half of a 20-year management agreement.

This plan calls for the planting of 1,200 trees on site, while creating 52

acres of new or expanded parkland. Organizers are optimistic that the project will spark redevelopment in surrounding south Dallas communities.

The **Allen County Agricultural Society**, Lima, Ohio, recently named **Chad Hughes**, to be their new promotions and operations manager, with a one-year contract. Hughes replaced **Bob Fricke**, whose contract was not renewed after serving as manager since 2015.

Hughes, who has been involved with the fair for 25 years, takes on the role after the 2020 fair lost thousands of dollars due to COVID-19 mandates that made the fair a junior fair-only event. The fair board closed this year's fair to the general public.

"I'm just excited to figure out how to navigate the fair through this wonderful pandemic that we're all experiencing but also bring some new creative ideas and then focus on the youth of Allen County and agriculture in our mission," Hughes told **limaohio.com**.

Previous roles over the years have included fair mascot, media coordinator, webmaster and social media. Most recently, Hughes worked at **Lima Memorial Health System** in their marketing department.

"I think the biggest challenge here is just making agriculture relevant and making people realize that the fair can become a destination all the time," Hughes said. "Every weekend there should be something here. So figuring out how we can get events here all the time, all year long and bringing people to our region and to Lima (is the goal)."

The Board for the **Kansas State Fair**, Hutchinson, gave approval to enter into a contract with former State Senator **Ed Berger** to be the interim general manager of the fair. Berger replaces **David Tobias** who resigned to accept a new opportunity in the area. Tobias had served as interim general manager for only three months, stepping in after the resignation of **Robin Jennison** in July.

Berger was the former President of **Hutchinson Community College** before holding the state senate seat.

The **Minnesota State Fairgrounds** is the site of a drive-thru holiday lights event. Centerpiece to the inaugural festival is a 100-foot Christmas tree. In addition to the tall tree are icicle and art installations and a gingerbread house, among other attractions. The light displays are produced by **Glow Holiday Festival, LLC**, running for 46 consecutive days from November 19 through January 3.

The mile-long course features a dozen different displays with more than a million lights. Attendees can purchase some popular **Minnesota State Fair** food items upon conclusion of the drive-thru. Entry is timed in 15-minute increments, with a complete trip estimated to take about 40 minutes. Tickets can be purchased for \$46 per vehicle online.



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# WATER PARKS & RECREATION

► News Splash — page 44 / Breaking news at AmusementToday.com

## Massive indoor Suntago Water Park opens in central Poland

AT: Jeffrey Seifert  
jseifert@amusementtoday.com

WREĆZA, Poland — This past summer, **Park of Poland**, an amusement and leisure park in Poland, opened the first phase of its development, **Suntago Water Park**. Said to be the largest indoor water park in Europe, Suntago encompasses 18 swimming pools, 32 waterslides, 10 saunas as well as luxury spas. The glass-enclosed, 67,000-square-meter (721,000-square-foot) water park is divided into three distinct areas: Jamango Water Jungle, Relax Suntago and Saunaria Suntago.

Relax Suntago includes a tropical garden with more than 700 plants. This area features a number of pools, including thermal pools, bubbling spring pools, whirlpools and a pool with a swim-up bar. The area also features a bathing pool infused with sulphur and two brine baths infused with Dead Sea salt and other minerals with curative properties. A semi-submerged revolving door leads from the main pool to a heated outdoor pool. Relax Suntago features a sliding glass roof that can be opened during periods of pleasant weather. Guests partaking in this section of the park must be 16 years of age or older.

Saunaria Suntago includes 12 different themed relaxation areas. The rooms are themed to various cultures such as a Nordic, Polish, Egyptian, Maldives, Korean, Swiss and Turkish. Eight rooms are set to different temperatures and humidities, and include an extreme sauna, traditional dry sauna, aroma sauna, aroma therapy, steam room, gentle shower, salt grotto



The exterior shot (above) shows the judicious use of glass in both the walls and roof. The massive layout (inset) with three distinct areas is seen in this overview of the park.  
COURTESY SUNTAGO WATER PARK



and cold room. The hottest, Valhalla, is a dry sauna set to 203 degrees Fahrenheit and the coldest, Mont Blanc is a chilly 10 degrees. Two rooms include jacuzzi pools, and two other rooms offer sunbeds, massages, and wellness or beauty treatments. Like Relax Suntago, Saunaria Suntago is only available to those at least 16 years of age.

Jamango Water Jungle is the main area where all the action takes place and is where families can spend their time together. It boasts 32 waterslides, totaling more than 10,000 feet in length. In addition to the slides there are various swimming pools,

a wave pool, lazy river, surfing simulator and water playground. Seating is provided by more than 4,000 deck-chairs. This building is also covered with a retractable glass roof. Lush landscaping with tropical plants, including 300 palm trees, decorate the warm, greenhouse-like environment. Five restaurants and four poolside bars offer a variety of food and beverage choices from American steaks to Japanese Sushi, Italian favorites, traditional Polish food, juices, specialty drinks, wraps, hot dogs and open-

face sandwiches.

All of the slides are concentrated in one area set aside from the lush tropical garden-like atmosphere. In stark contrast to the rest of the park, the slide complex is in surroundings that are very gray and industrial looking, but the bright, colorful waterslides give vivid contrast. Among the slides are at least a dozen signature attractions provided by **Polin Waterparks** of Turkey.

The longest slide cuts through the park's lobby and drops more than five stories to ground level. High-

profile slides include Crazy Dive, a looping rocket that begins with a launch capsule 73 feet in the air. Two different Aquatube body slides feature Polin's unique glassy sections comprised of transparent fiberglass.

Rainbow Race is a multi-colored, eight-lane Windigo mat slide that begins with an enclosed tunnel section and ends with eight parallel racing lanes. Shark Bowl is one of the largest speed slides that combines an enclosed tube with a huge, open bowl where centrifugal force whirls guests toward the exit. Green Mamba is nearly 985 feet long and starts from a height of 65 feet. Riders are seated in rafts that hold up to three people.

Black Thunder is a dark body slide that utilizes Polin's natural light and sound effects technology to produce a dazzling show throughout the slide. Hunters Raft Race combines Polin's family rafting slide with a wave slide to provide steep drops and uphill sections. Tiger's Race is a dual, racing waterslide that has riders in rafts racing each other through downhill and uphill blasts through open and tunneled sections. Jungle Eclipse is one of the longest raft slides stretching inside and outside the building and includes multiple light effects, a sphere section as well as a glassy tube clear section.

Mad Octopus, another raft ride with uphill sections, includes two space shuttle enclosures where guests oscillate in a space shuttle pod before continuing to the next section of the slide. All of the slides end with runout

► See SUNTAGO, page 44

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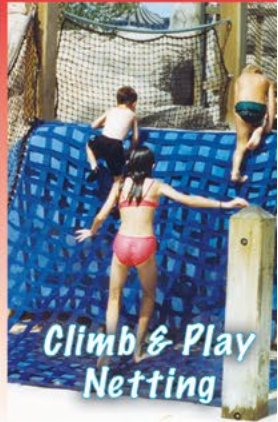
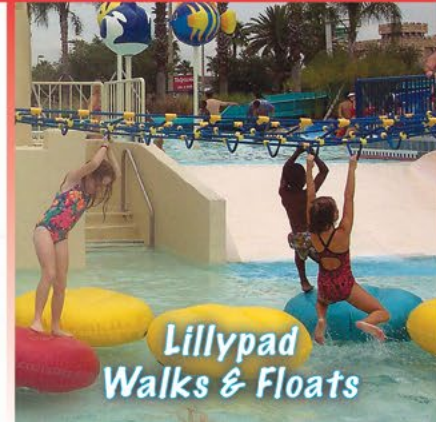
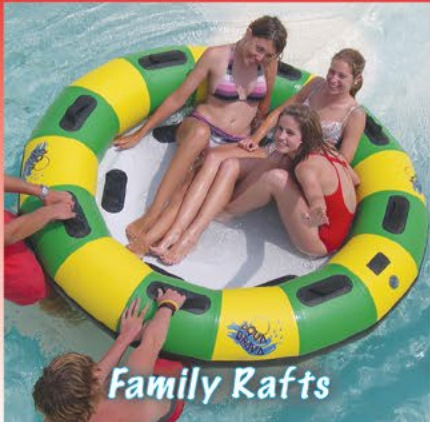
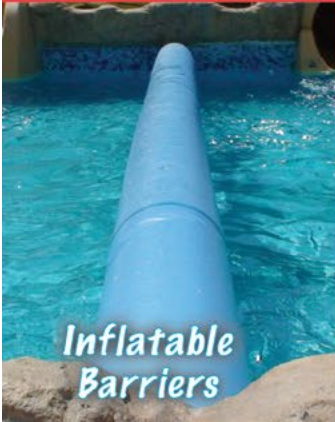


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The Suntago River Adventure offers an intriguing cavern-like journey. COURTESY SUNTAGO WATER PARK

## ►SUNTAGO

Continued from page 42

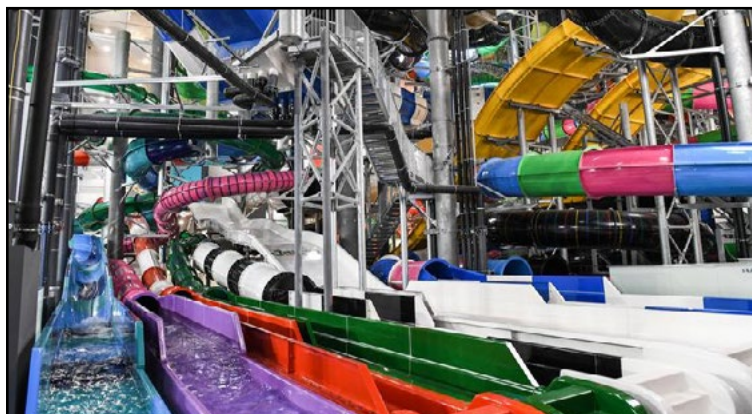
sections instead of splash-down pools for easy exiting after the ride is complete.

Polin Waterparks was awarded the **World Waterpark Association's** Leading Edge Award for its innovation and leadership in the design, production and installation of Suntago Water World.

Park of Poland — with a budget of €180 million (US\$190.6) — is designed to appeal to clients of all ages and is part of the growing tourist infrastructure that has been expanding in major Polish cities. Located about 31 miles from the capital city of Warsaw, the park was first conceived in 2011. Construction was delayed several times, eventually beginning in May 2017. The entire development covers 990 acres and includes 100 bungalows, which have already opened, along with a 240-room, four-star hotel and conference center currently under construction. The hotel will be connected

directly to the water park. A theme park, shopping center and additional hotels are also planned. According to developers **Global City Holdings**, once completed in about six years, Park of Poland will be the second largest entertainment complex in Europe.

Suntago Water Park is open 365 days a year and operates 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. on weekends and holidays. The park is built to accommodate 10,000 people at one time but had been operating with reduced capacity since opening due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It was expected to draw 1 million guests its first year. Unfortunately, on October 17, the park was forced to close after the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland enforced new safety rules suspending the operation of swimming pools, aquatic parks and gymnasiums in response to a worsening epidemic situation. The park will remain closed until the Polish government announces new regulations.



The main slide area is all business with slides packed closely together. COURTESY SUNTAGO WATER PARK



## NEWS SPLASH

AT: Jeffrey L. Seifert

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Torrelavega, Spain, could be home to a new water park. The city council is working on a plan to build a 3.7-acre park to provide recreational opportunities for its citizens and to help increase tourism. Torrelavega is just a few kilometers away from the **Altamira Cave**, known for its prehistoric cave drawings. The new park, estimated to cost €10 (\$11.7) million, would reflect the cave and canyon heritage of the region as well as the historic art of the Cenozoic Era. Torrelavega currently lacks municipal outdoor swimming pools, which forces residents to go to neighboring municipalities.

County commissioners in Miami-Dade County, Florida, have approved a plan to add a water park adjacent to the **Miami Zoo**. **Miami Wilds Water Park** will use a portion of the Zoo's parking lot. The approval took place despite objections from environmental groups who opposed the project fearing that development would harm the endangered Florida Bonneted bat.

**Miami-Dade Parks, Recreation and Open Spaces** has promised to make compromises to accommodate the bats including adjustments to lighting.

The current proposal includes a 40-year lease of the land and is expected to generate \$120.7 million in revenue over the life of the lease. The water park is expected to take two years to construct.

The city council of Salem, Massachusetts, has approved a \$1.1 million spending request to start demolition work on a decommissioned pool and bathhouse at **Forest Park**. The pool, which has been closed for three years, will be replaced with a new pool and splashpad next summer.

The new \$10 million project is in the final planning stages, with approval expected this November. Along with a new pool, bathhouse and splashpad, the Forest Park upgrade includes hiking trails, walking paths, accessible trails, a community room, concessions, office space, educational signage and what is being referred to as an "art-integrated water feature."

The **Shore Aquatic Center** in Port Angeles, Washington, reopened on October 24, following a \$20 million renovation and expansion.

The former **William Shore Memorial Pool** closed in May 2019 for an expansion that resulted in doubling the size of the aquatic center.

There are now four pools in the new center: a six-lane lap pool with a diving well, a wellness pool for water aerobics and exercise classes, and an activity pool with a current river and a hot tub spa.

The reopening was planned for June before the coronavirus delayed construction.

Initially, the 30,000-square-foot pool will operate at a 50-person capacity due to COVID-19 precautions. The pool was designed for more than 300 swimmers.

The first stage of the **Murray Bridge Swimming Centre** in Murray Bridge, South Australia, was completed with the center reopening on October 30. The first stage included an AU\$2.8 (US\$2.0) million investment to renovate the existing 50-meter Olympic pool with an access ramp, upgraded pipework, filtration and chlorination systems. The stage one work also included children's and toddler's pools and an upgrade to the changing room facilities.

The center's master plan includes four more stages of upgrades with a total investment of AU\$32 (US\$22.8) million. Long term plans for the facility include a 25-meter indoor pool, spa, gym, cafe, day-care center and multi-purpose meeting space.

Construction is continuing on a new aquatic center in DePere, Wisconsin. The new center taking shape at **VFW Park** includes a six-lane lap pool, two diving boards, a 12-foot drop slide, a climbing area and a zero-depth entry pool. According to the city, the center is on track to open in June 2021. The center has been in the works since 2018 when a referendum was passed to update two facilities, one at VFW park and a second at **Legion Park**. The existing pool at Legion Park will be kept operational until the VFW facility is open. Once the VFW center is complete, Legion Park will be closed to begin refurbishment.

**Indy Island Aquatic Center** in Indianapolis, Indiana, has reopened following renovations. The 25-year-old center — one of the city's most popular — held a ribbon-cutting ceremony on October 22. Renovations to the indoor center include new additions like a waterfall, coral reef with spraying octopus and a 101-foot-long waterslide. The facility also added LED lighting throughout the pool deck, new circulation pumps, an updated electrical service and a new ADA accessible lift chair. The walls and floors were resurfaced and other enhancements were added throughout the pool area.

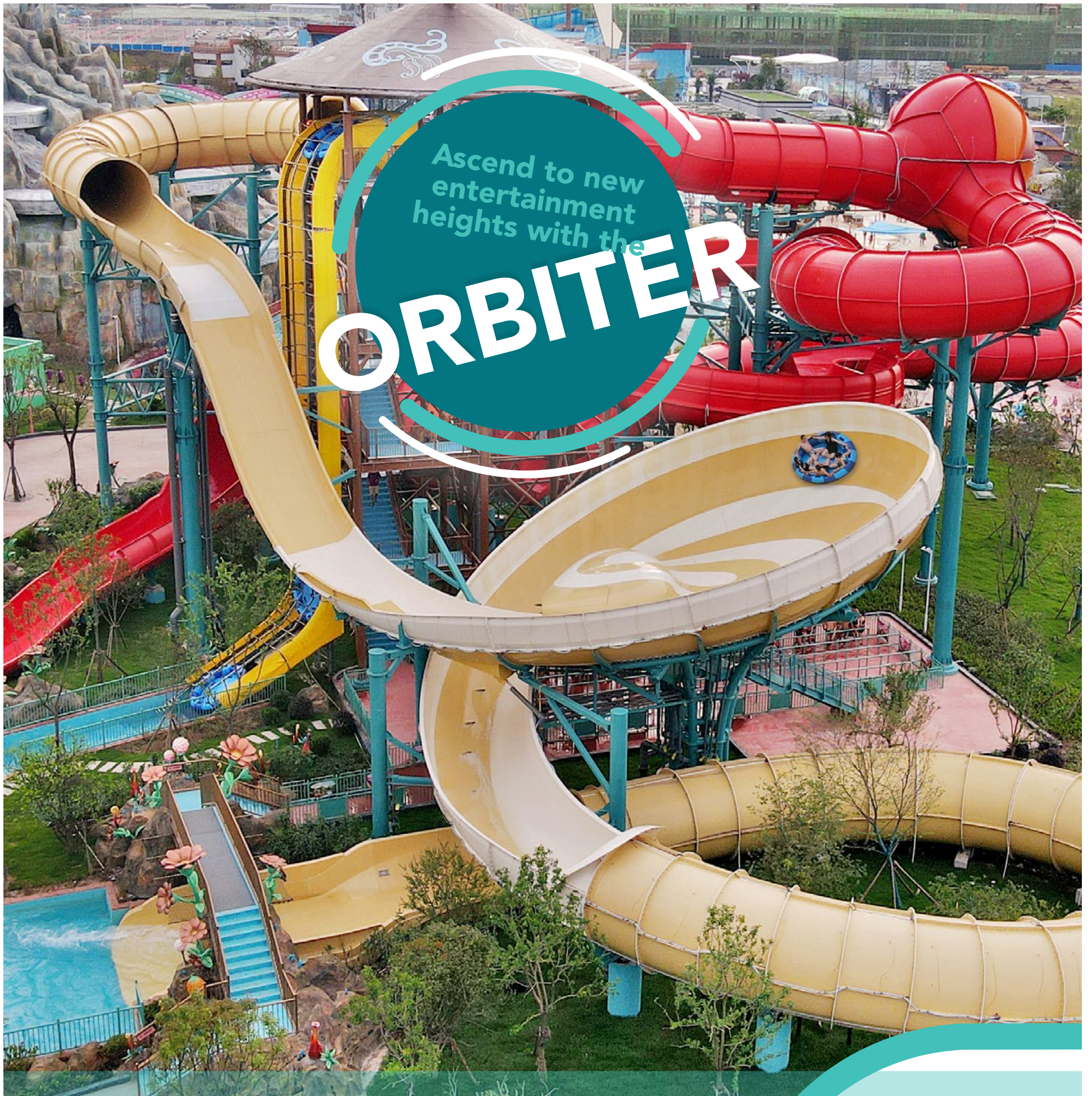
The center has a partnership with nearby **Raymond Park Middle School** offering swimming lessons, water walking, aqua aerobics and kayaking.

**Great Wolf Resorts** is appealing a decision by the Cherwell District Council after it rejected a multi-million-pound project to build a Great Wolf Lodge in Chesterton, England, adjacent to the **Bicester Hotel and Golf Spa**. The proposal was to include a 498-room hotel with an indoor water park and family entertainment center similar to the facilities that have become extremely popular in the United States.

City and county residents expressed concerns that the project was too big for the area and that the county roads were not designed to handle the influx of cars that were expected once the facility opened.

The Chesterton, England, project was Great Wolf Resorts' first venture overseas.





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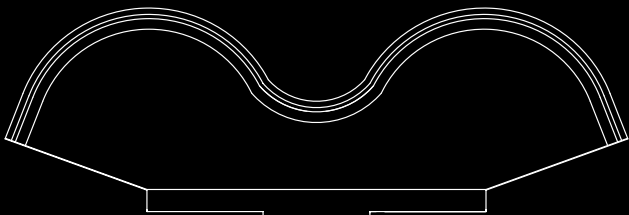


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# BUSINESS & NEWSMAKERS

► **Women of Influence: Ann-Kathrin Mack** — page 50 / **Growth of Rhode Island Novelty** — page 52

*Donations from enthusiasts and industry put to impressive use*

## National Roller Coaster Museum expansion sees great progress

AT: Tim Baldwin

tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

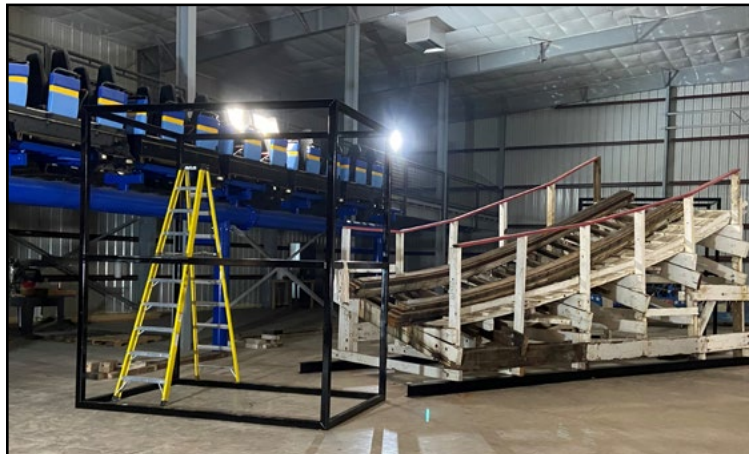
PLAINVIEW, Texas — Established in 2009, the **National Roller Coaster Museum and Archives** facility in West Texas is seeing considerable growth.

In its first decade, the property expanded from the original warehouse to three, along with a climate-controlled archival room. Donations from **American Coaster Enthusiasts** were able to get the initial building up and purposed. Placed on land donated by **Larson International**, collections and roller coaster vehicles now had a home. A donation from **Cliff's Amusement Park** added a second, connected warehouse, essentially doubling the space, along with the archive room which houses major collections of blueprints and historic materials. **Knoebels Amusement Resort** donated funds to continue expansion with a third connecting warehouse as collections began to amass.

Those steps were just the beginning.

The NRCMA board, comprised of industry professionals and enthusiasts, have recently swung for the bleachers. From those original storage warehouses came a plan for a usable and engaging museum space.

"As something that started only four years ago with a fundraising drive to honor former museum board member **Mark Moore**, it's exciting to see the building expansion as it comes to fruition," said **Jerry Willard**, NRCMA treasurer. "Donations have allowed the museum to purchase materials and services to erect the building and construct the interiors, while volunteers have provided most of the labor for free, so limited dollars can stretch fur-



The Hersheypark sooperdooperLooper train and Texas Cyclone structure are initial pieces being moved into the museum space. AT/GARY SLADE

ther and accomplish more."

Over the past year, much work has been done. Two new additions have seen auspicious progress. The new museum hall is well underway. The grand space is 8,400 square feet, but also features a mezzanine offering 2,400 square feet, making that entire building more than 10,000 square feet to be used for exhibits. The new hall is all climate controlled. In addition, what the NRCMA board terms the "connector building" is an additional 1,620 feet. When added to the original warehouses (7,840 square feet), the completed installation will soon offer close to 20,000 square feet of usable space.

One of the most active board members is *Amusement Today* Publisher **Gary Slade**. As a frequent recipient of industry donations and a liaison with Larson International in propelling momentum, Slade is a frequent visitor who transports materials and donations to Plainview.

"The connector building is 95% complete," Slade reported. "It serves as the entrance to the museum, has a lobby area, a welcome theater, restrooms

and utilities. From it, there are entrance portals to the new museum as well as the storage warehouses. One of the nicest parts is a bar/reception area that has a lot of details that coaster fans will love."

Those Easter eggs come from both repurposed and custom-made aesthetic touches. A bar was donated by **Rocky Mountain Construction** and was first seen at the Golden Ticket Awards in Idaho last fall. Made from repurposed wood from **Cedar Point's** Mean Streak, the bar top also has **Ben**



The reception area features a bar built from repurposed wood from Cedar Point's Mean Streak roller coaster. Ride parts from a Ben Schiff kiddie coaster are embedded below the acrylic surface. It was created by Rocky Mountain Construction.

AT/ GARY SLADE; COURTESY HUNTER NOVOTNY/LARSON INTERNATIONAL



A wide range of coaster vehicles are on view at the NRCMA facility. COURTESY KRIS ROWBERRY

**Schiff** kiddie coaster parts from **Fun Spot America** (Kissimmee) embedded into the wood below the acrylic surface. Larson International created a custom-made lighting fixture above the bar that uses sculpted metal to give flair to the room, while at the same time using repurposed wood from **Six Flags Magic Mountain's** Colossus.

More Easter eggs follow throughout for coaster

aficionados. One of the portal entrances is a barn door constructed from wood reclaimed from **AstroWorld's** Texas Cyclone, of which some structure is on display in the museum. The mezzanine's entire floor is repurposed wood from **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay's** Gwazi, and the staircase to the upper floor

► See NRCMA, page 49





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# 1918 car from Rocky Springs Jack Rabbit enters NRCMA collection



COURTESY NRCMA



COURTESY NRCMA

PLAINVIEW, Texas — As the **National Roller Coaster Museum** (NRCMA) completes its expansion, the organization is still working to preserve and protect the history of the amusement industry. The museum recently took possession of a car from the former **Rocky Springs Jack Rabbit** coaster in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, where it was in operation from 1918-1927. It was donated by **Jim Bowen** and **John Hayek**, long-time amusement park fans and members of **American Coaster Enthusiasts** (ACE).

"In 1918 the Jack Rabbit would have operated with three, three-car trains," **B. Derek Shaw**, an NRCMA historian explained. "The number nine on the donated car denotes it was the last car of the three trains." The coaster was in operation only nine years between the park's Figure 8 coaster and the more well-known Wildcat. The ride was designed by **John Miller** and built by **Philadelphia Toboggan Company**.

"We know this train operated as the Jack Rabbit and not the park's Wildcat coaster because it has bronze bushing wheels and not the more modern roller bearing wheels which operated on the trains of the Wildcat. It is a beautiful example of that era and even features the original paint and likely the original upholstery," Shaw added.

The car is a treasure that was thought lost. The three trains were stored under the park's ballroom and were sold at auction in 1984. From that time, it has been in a private collection. Board members **Jeff Novotny** and **Richard Munch** assisted in acquiring the car and eventually moving it to the museum site.

In addition to the Jack Rabbit car, the museum recently received a model of the Phoenix wooden coaster after a three-year restoration by Arlington, Texas, model builder **Dave Rouse**. The Phoenix is located at **Knoebels Amusement Resort** in Elysburg, Pennsylvania. The model was originally built by ACE member **John Hunt** and was donated to the NRCMA by Dayton, Ohio, resident **Beth Remhoff**. A display base and stand, complete with acrylic cover, is currently under construction. When complete, the model will be on display at the National Roller Coaster Museum's new building, currently under construction in Plainview, Texas.

## ►NRCMA

Continued from page 48

is created from ledgers from Mean Streak and supported by track from **Busch Gardens Williamsburg's Big Bad Wolf**.

"The mezzanine is for light-weight exhibits," said Slade. "It could be models, signage, souvenirs, etc. The heavy-weight artifacts will be on the main floor. As for the mezzanine floor, you can see the drill holes, stains and where other boards have come in. It's really neat to look at. It's really solid, too."

The intention for the mezzanine is to have a general flow as visitors walk through the

upstairs exhibit. Elevated 12 feet in the air, right at the edge of the mezzanine is a **Hersheypark** train from **Gerstlauer** that ran on the park's SooperdooperLooper roller coaster, which can be viewed from below or from the mezzanine. Larson created the track on which the train is positioned. One of the displays on the mezzanine will be an updated version of the historical timeline of the roller coaster that was first displayed at the IAAPA Expo in 2013.

Below the mezzanine, the current plan is to display the NRCMA's considerable collection of models. Protected by plexiglass, visitors can stroll

through and see various rides and attractions portrayed in miniature for promotional reasons over the years. Slade hopes to showcase close to 20 models in that space.

Once final spacing is determined in the new grand hall, water park artifacts and other donated items can be evaluated for display or rotation. The main focus — as the facility's name implies — is on roller coasters.

Overseeing the construction is **Hunter Novotny**, VP of sales and marketing, Larson International.

"The museum is really beginning to come to life. We're beginning to transition from a building construction project to the stages of filling the building with meaningful artifacts and décor," said Novotny. "As we finish the first stage of construction in the connector building that serves as our entrance, theater and restrooms, one can really start to see the space change from a set of enclosed spaces to a museum."

Progress on the main room has now allowed the initial exhibits and vehicles to find their way into the museum hall.

"Virtually every piece of roller coaster hardware currently in those buildings will move into the new museum showroom," said Slade.

"Placing the first few items in the museum has definitely gotten our team excited and proud to see all of their work come together to form something that can't be seen anywhere else in the world," said Novotny.

Once that is accomplished, the previous warehouses become usable space for expanded archive rooms, stor-

PTCI cars from the Lake Compounce Wildcat will be placed on a display structure inside the new museum hall.

COURTESY NRCMA



age and overflow areas. When the power is turned on in the museum showroom, it will be the equivalent to that of four 2,000-square-foot homes.

Several industry companies have also come on board to show support. **Baynum Painting** was involved with the polished, painted concrete throughout the new additions. **Amuse Rides** has recently refurbished sections of Texas Cyclone track to be structurally sound to be moved and placed inside the museum. With design work provided by **Skyline Attractions**, **Great Coasters International, Inc.** is building a section of display track for **Idlewild's Rollo Coaster** train to be displayed with flair. **American Coaster Enthusiasts**, **Larson International**, **Ride Entertainment**, **Gerstlauer**, **Rocky Mountain Construction**, **Uremet** and **Vekoma** have provided monetary donations.

In a year where every single move seems impacted by COVID-19, it has proven to be a double-edged sword in this case.

"The virus has been ironically helpful in that it has created a lot of free time," Slade said. "There's no trade shows or sales trips. We can't do the things that we normally would do, so we can dedicate time to the museum. [Larson] has dedicated six to eight people a day

working in the museum building. That physical labor has helped some things come about very quickly. But that will slow down eventually. However, the health crisis has created a hiccup in fundraising."

Slade is quick to acknowledge that donations from ACE continue to help keep things moving forward.

"Additional financial assistance and donations are appreciated so that exhibits and displays can be developed to make the dream of an operating museum a reality. We are closer than ever to that reality," said Willard.

Slade reported that a target of Fall 2022 is possible for completion, but also noted that doing things right is of importance, even if it has to extend beyond that goal. Already, displays and signage are being written and produced.

"I have personally been helping in the process of bringing some of the display concepts to life by taking our models and sketches and creating shop drawings for building some of the track sections and supports for the vehicles and signage," said Novotny. "With a ton of help from the team here, we are making headway to something that we hope can be appreciated for years to come!"

•rollercoastermuseum.org



A timeline of the history of the roller coaster is being updated and recreated for display. This original (above) appeared at the 2013 IAAPA Expo. One of the portal entrances is a barn door created from wood from **AstroWorld's Texas Cyclone** (right). AT/TIM BALDWIN, GARY SLADE





# Women INFLUENCE

## A view from the top...

**Ann-Kathrin Mack** grew up among the magic of **Europa-Park**. Founded by her parents, **Roland** and **Marianne Mack**, and grandparents, **Franz** and **Liesel Mack**, Europa-Park opened in 1975. It is the largest theme park in Germany and one of the most popular in Europe.

As an architect, Mack has been able to create and design park attractions guests will never see anywhere else.

## Creating magic in family business

RUST, Germany — Europa-Park is Ann-Kathrin Mack's home. She grew up among the rides and attractions and played there with her brothers. She said that she and her brothers, Michael and Thomas Mack, probably know the best hiding places in the park.

"As a child, our family business was a huge adventure playground," Mack said. "When I was very small, among other things, the Viking Land, today Ireland – Children's World, was opened with many attractions for the youngest ones. That was just the right thing for me as a curious girl."

She and her brothers watched as their parents, Roland and Marianne Mack, and grandparents, Franz and Liesel Mack, turned a centuries-old castle and gardens into Europa-Park. They then watched as they expanded and expanded over the years, adding themed areas, rides and attractions.

Mack said she knows things might not have always been easy for her parents during those early years, but for her and her brothers, it was a magical journey.

In addition, it was clear to her very early on that she wanted to join the family business and continue the Mack tradition with her brothers. The three are the eighth generation in the Mack family business, which includes not only the park but the manufacturing side that traces back to 1780.

"So I started working towards this goal when I was young and gained experience in different areas of Europa-Park," Mack said.

She found architecture to be a perfect blend of science and art.

"On the one hand, there is the functional, technical planning and on the other hand the aesthetic, efficient design," she said. "This interplay of scientific and creative elements is particularly exciting to me. I guess it didn't hurt as a teenager I became interested in building models like you see on model train sets. When

it came out great, it gave me a real sense of accomplishment."

She also found that, as an architect, there were many opportunities to become involved in the family business, "as we are always building something."

"I decided, after my A-levels, to study architecture at the University of Applied Sciences (HTWG) in Constance in 2010," Mack said. "My studies of architecture allowed me to ideally combine my professional and private interests."

To date, Mack said the thing that has given her the most personal pride is the resort's new indoor water park, Rulantica, and the adjacent themed-hotel, Krønasår. Both opened in 2019.

"I associate a very special feeling about this as it was a big risk for us as we had to deliver the 'Mack level of quality' we are known for with a great story, great rides and do it in a part of the industry, 'water parks,' that was not an area we had much experience in when we started," she said.

At more than €180 million (\$210 million), the resort expansion represents the largest investment the Mack family has ever made.

"To have been involved in this gigantic development step and to continue to pursue it, is a great experience," Mack continued. "But even more important is that it has been received so well by our guests and is already a successful business."

Mack was credited with wanting to surprise her father with his own animatronic within Pirates in Batavia dark ride. A fire consumed the show building of that ride in 2018. It reopened in July with her father's animatronic in the middle of the harbor city Batavia.

"We wanted to surprise him and make him happy," she said. "He did not know anything about this so the first time he spotted it, he was shocked, surprised and happy and, now, he himself is part of this unique attraction as a magician, which is very

## Ann-Kathrin Mack

Architect, Authorized Signatory and Partner  
Europa-Park  
Rust, Germany



symbolic as he and we make magical memories as a business."

Mack feels working with family makes the product outcome the best it can be.

"We each bring different expertise and look at things from different perspectives," she said. "A great debate is important as it can take a good idea and make it better or, if it is a bad idea, expose its weaknesses. If there are any discrepancies, it is, of course, important to address them openly and to resolve them quickly. Up to now, we have always succeeded in doing this in cases of doubt and together we have always achieved a good result."

Although always room for more gender diversity in businesses in general across Europe, Mack feels proud that at Europa-Park, the head of the six themed hotels is a woman who has been with the Mack family for many years.

"We have a lot of women managers and supervisors in our major departments," she said. "In

my department, we have some very talented female designers and there are even some great women working in our maintenance and gardening department. Therefore, I think this is a trend that has been accelerating in recent years all over Europe as girls discover what a great industry this is.

"I think it is not always easy for many women to combine family and career," Mack said. "Fortunately, I manage to do this quite well, because the two go hand-in-hand in my case. There have been situations on the construction site, for example, where I have had to assert myself. But this is an exciting challenge to me. I like it."

Like so many others in the amusement industry, Mack feels fortunate working in an industry that makes people smile. In addition, being an architect gives her the opportunity to create things that Europa-Park guests will not see anywhere else in their normal world.

"And that is a privilege and honor I don't take for granted," she said.

—Pam Sherborne



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# Humble beginnings led to growth for popular Rhode Island Novelty

FALL RIVER, Mass. — **Bob Nowak** probably never envisioned that peddling balloons curbside with a shopping cart during seasonal parades would put him on a path to monumental success.

Yet that modest start back in 1986 was the beginning of **Rhode Island Novelty**, today arguably the world's largest wholesale distributor of gooey slime, inflatable and light-up toys and thousands of other products for the amusement industry.

According to company spokesman, **Michael Nowak**, the business had its beginnings in Warwick, R.I., and eventually moved to Johnston and then Cumberland, R.I., before opening a mammoth complex in Massachusetts a decade ago. Bob Nowak currently serves as CEO of the company he founded.

Growth for the company has been enormous. Michael Nowak pointed out, "We service more than 20 industries now."

Nowak continued, "We grew from servicing parades, parks and circuses — realizing there was a need for retail-quality products for zoos and aquariums."

Rhode Island Novelty seized the opportunity by creating a line of products known as Adventure Planet for attractions highlighting wildlife. The 2020 catalog contains more than 200 pages of themed items for zoos, aquariums and other entertainment industry attractions.

"We created the entire line (Adventure Planet) ourselves," Michael Nowak asserted.

## Sales worldwide

The upswing in sales for Rhode Island Novelty didn't stop there.



Solar panels cover a large portion of the massive Rhode Island Novelty campus in Fall River, Mass.  
COURTESY RHODE ISLAND NOVELTY

Quick to jump in on the online shopping phenomena, the business's products are also readily available on Amazon and Walmart.com.

Of the wholesale distributors of Rhode Island Novelty's wares, Amazon leads the pack.

"We've started to dabble internationally with customers in South America, North Africa and the Middle East," Nowak noted, although domestic sales still account for about 90% of the company's income.

Thumbing through the company's catalogs seems to be the next best thing to the Christmas season Wish Books of yesteryear. There are more toys than a customer can shake a stick at, plus costume accessories, candy, electronics

and musical instruments.

There are around 7,000 different items in the wholesale catalog at any given time and more than 15,000 products offered across board through Rhode Island Novelty.

## Welcome to the family

"Some of our items are in categories we call 'families,' such as our new popular Belly Buddies," Nowak said of the diverse product line. "These soft plush animal characters come in a variety of sizes, making them ideal for redemption centers, midway game prizes and even retail sales."

Dozens of pages in the Adventure Planet directory are dedicated to the extensive offerings of plush "families."

"This is not only good stuff for zoos and aquariums, but parks and other attrac-

tions, as well as gift shops and toy stores," he added.

## Logoed merchandise

The company also broadened its horizon by introducing imprinted and custom souvenirs about a decade ago.

"We wanted to be the best that we can — the complete shopping experience for our customers," Nowak said of the line of logoed merchandise.

What makes the service attractive for seasonal and smaller businesses is that many items can be processed in short runs of less than 50 pieces.

Turnaround times are as little as a week or two in what the company calls its Quick Print selections — the best selling, in-stock merchandise.

"We felt we needed to be aggressive with the turnaround time on the smaller

quantities, so we decided to give it a try and see if it works," Nowak asserted.

The venture was a success and now most customers opt for their logo to be imprinted on bottles, coffee mugs, tumblers, shot glasses and children's sipper cups. Novelty items such as giant pens and pencils, color water timers, gumball machines and toys are also available in the catalog, which features more than 600 products

Nowak continued, saying: "It's (product line) really unlimited in the sense of what is available overseas."

In other words, if Rhode Island Novelty doesn't currently have something a customer is interested in, the company can search out a supplier and — perhaps — do a custom imprint order.

## Solar energy

The sprawling distribution center and offices incorporate more than 8,000 solar panels capable of supplying much of the electricity for the complex.

"We did that a while back as it made good economic sense for us," Nowak emphasized. "It's been great for us."

During normal operating times, Rhode Island Novelty employs around 240 persons with around a half dozen working as outside sales representatives across the U.S.

And no dust settles on the enormous inventory offered, as about 150 new items are introduced each month. Many of those newer items are promoted online with e-blasts as well as promotional fliers.

## Get it while it's hot

When asked about some of the best selling items, Nowak was quick to point out that "it depends on the industry."

Current trends include "anything you can squeeze that is squishy; also putty and slime."

"Squish toys are doing very well, especially the large sizes. Belly Buddies are doing great and have worked well in cranes (arcade) as well as retail. Plush sloths are also popular."

Rhode Island Novelty also carries 300 different inflates, including licensed and generic items.

"What's been pretty cool is that — recently — we used



Showrooms at the Rhode Island Novelty complex are filled with hundreds of products offered by the supplier.  
COURTESY RHODE ISLAND NOVELTY



**►NOVELTY**

Continued from page 52

the design of a balloon dog to create a plush piece," he continued. "If a design works well, we'll push it through to other product categories. We have a great in-house design team that is always working to improve upon product design."

A prime example is the tri-color light-up necklace, which the firm held a patent on. Light-up products, popular at circuses, evenings at theme parks and other venues with nighttime operations, are another huge offering with around 300 different items available.

Nowak further explained that Rhode Island Novelty "buys a lot of stuff off the shelf, but we tweak it from packaging on down."

Truck loads of merchandise leave the warehouse daily and with some trade show orders, shipping is free. The company attends around 35 shows worldwide annually.

We certainly do the best we can to keep shipping costs down," he noted. "Being strategic in shipping helps, too, as we try to fit as much as we can on a pallet."



Inside the distribution center at Rhode Island Novelty in Fall River, Mass., where thousands of different products are shipped worldwide. COURTESY RHODE ISLAND NOVELTY

#### Acquired strong line of product

Following the devastation in the wake of 2012's Super Storm Sandy along the East Coast, Rhode Island Novelty acquired NANCO (Nancy Sales Co.) of Chelsea, Mass. The company, founded in 1937, had a strong line of licensed plush and other items for the amusement industry. The operation was sold after it sustained substantial damage in the storm.

"A couple of their sales people and product guys

came to us," Nowak said of the acquisition. "Two of them have been in the industry their entire working lives and are extremely good at what they do. They know game operators like you wouldn't believe."

Reflecting on the business, Nowak said, "It's dynamic. It's everything about people — making kids happy. Those moments when I watch kids smiling with some of our light-up products — how can you have a bad day when you see that?"

• [rinovalty.com](http://rinovalty.com)

## Close encounters of the inflatable kind

FALL RIVER, Mass. — While strolling along the midway at an amusement park or fairgrounds, it's not unusual to come across a vendor displaying a variety of inflatable toys.

**Rhode Island Novelty** offers a menagerie of balloon animal figures, yet one of its most popular lines is a variety of alien characters, both big and small. From a 12-inch "hug me" green alien to an eight-foot jumbo, there are more than a dozen different versions to select from. Among the newest offerings are rainbow, tie dye and galaxy (colors) themes.

#### Behind The 8 Ball?

Baby boomers likely remember the classic 8 ball toy that made its debut in the 1960s. It gave you answers to simple questions when you turned it over. Rhode Island Novelty created its own version called the Magic Orb which is a nifty retail and redemption piece. You can also have it imprinted!

#### Spring Into Action

Some things never grow old, and that could be said of toy coil springs just about every kid on the street had when growing up. Dozens of varieties — from metal to colorful plastic — are offered. Some even glow in the dark! Remember the challenge of making them walk down the stairs?

#### Goo And Poo

The 2020 wholesale catalog contains six — yes six — full pages of all kinds of slime, putty and even stretch magic poo. Perhaps more unique, Unicorn Poo, and it's pink!

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## OBITUARIES

## Lagoon amusement park pioneer, Peter Freed

FARMINGTON, Utah — Peter Freed passed on August 29 at the age of 99. Along with his brothers, Freed turned the shuttered Lagoon Amusement Park into a favorite Utah playground and a cultural icon.

Born James Claude (Jimmy) Freed on Jan. 8, 1921, in Salt Lake City, Freed hated the name his parents, Jasmine and Lester Freed, gave him. He persuaded his mother to take him to Salt Lake District Court to have it legally changed to Peter.

The youngest of five brothers, Peter Freed returned from World War II — where he served four years in Naval Intelligence — and, “my oldest brother Dave asked what we would all do,” Freed recalled to *The Salt Lake Tribune* in 2012. “We came up with the idea of going to the Bambergers and getting them to lease us the park.” After scraping together whatever money they could get, the Freeds reopened Lagoon in May 1946. Fewer than 100 people showed up the first day, but Peter and his older brother, Bob, were thrilled. “We would open around 3 p.m.,” Freed added in the 2012 interview. “We would be here all day and stay up late at night when we would count money by hand. Gradually, things got a little better and we started adding to it.”

One of Freed’s favorite attractions, Pioneer Village, was opened in 1976. The village is a simulation of an old-time Utah town, with authentic pioneer and Victorian structures — including Summit County’s first two-story house — moved intact to the site. According to the website Lagoon History Project, Freed also was a proponent of family picnics at the park, which is why Lagoon is unique among amusement parks in that it allows outside food.

## Dena Calabrese, founder of Themendous

NEW YORK CITY — Dena Ann Calabrese, born January 18, 1971, passed away peacefully on August 9, 2020 from her battle with cancer. Her husband, Giovanni Calabrese, was at her side.

Calabrese was an alumnus of the Weehawken school system and graduate of the Fashion Institute of Technology. She used her education to not only work for Anne Klein in New York City, but to design and create custom drapery and dresses for private local clients. She and Giovanni became reacquainted, fell in love, were married on August 26, 2000, and started working together at their co-owned local scenic studio business: Themendous. There, they produced costumes and sculpture work for companies such as the Macy’s Parade, Google, amusement parks, TV shows, movie props and one of their locally known works: “Mr. Tree” at the Weehawken Public Library.

Giovanni, Dena and their children traveled extensively throughout the States, Italy, Germany, Mexico, Jamaica and even Cuba amongst other places for both work and pleasure. Their travels led to many adventures, funny stories and moments of danger with near death experiences: scaling up mountain ridges, diving through underwater rock tunnels and exploring abandoned castles.

## Julio Gosdinski, Griffith Park's carousel man

LOS ANGELES — For decades, children have come from all over to ride the Griffith Park carousel. What often kept them coming back was the friendly man with the big smile who operated the nearly 100-year-old merry-go-round.

Julio Gosdinski, a native of Peru who began working at the attraction as a teenager and became so devoted to it that the owner eventually made him co-owner, passed Aug. 7. He was 49.

“He had this magic, this magnetic personality people were drawn to,” said Kei Nguyen, who had known him for years.

Gosdinski became the carousel’s keeper, the one who touched up the paint on the carved horses and maintained the 94-year-old equipment.

“That was his first and last job is what he likes to say,” said his friend Dora Herrera, an officer on the Friends of Griffith Park board.

The carousel was not just a job for Gosdinski, he called it an escape from the ‘real world’ in a 2017 interview. As riders flew by on the horses, Gosdinski could be seen leaning back on a bench belting out tunes from the carousel’s Stinson 165 Military Band Organ.



Freed



Calabrese



Gosdinski

## ON THE MOVE

**Stern Pinball, Inc.**, announced the appointment of **Evan Kirby** as Director of North American Commercial Sales.

Kirby will report to Chief Revenue Officer **John Buscaglia** to service and grow the commercial market in North America. Kirby will be helping to expand the reach of all Stern Pinball products in the commercial channel while building upon the foundation of our distribution channel through arcade bars, breweries, FECs and street operations.

“With Stern’s continued rapid growth, we are committed to investing in the expansion of our sales and marketing team. Evan has over a decade of experience in the amusement game industry and will offer a fresh perspective to our distribution partners to assist them in growing location-based pinball,” said **Gary Stern**, CEO of Stern Pinball.

**7thSense** has promoted **Jack Dowd** to the position of product manager of the Delta Media Server range.

“Jack’s promotion is incredibly well-deserved, and a reflection of his vast understanding of, and contribution to, our Delta Media Server line of products,” noted **Richard Brown**, 7thSense CTO. “Jack has been instrumental in the development of new product features over the years, ensuring that our customers always receive the highest standard of service and support. We look forward to the next chapter with him as a new member of our expanding product management team.”

Dowd continues his career progression at 7thSense with this promotion. Since joining the company in 2013 as Systems Engineer within the production department, Dowd was promoted to Technical Sales and Systems Engineer as a key member of the 7thSense sales team in 2019 — providing technical support to customers, as well as the commissioning of systems on-site.

Jack’s time with 7thSense has seen him play an active role in the design and delivery of many high-profile theme park and museum projects globally. In 2020, Jack was individually recognised for his contribution to the Museum of the Bible’s Hebrew Experience — a project that was presented with a Thea Award for Outstanding Achievement.

Following its annual meeting in September, the **American Amusement Machine Association (AAMA)** added to its board of directors.

The three-day AAMA Annual Meeting saw the election of **Gregory Bacorn (Barron Games)** and **Jeff Blair (Sureway Gaming)**, and reelection of **Jon W. Brady (Player One Amusement Group)** and **Jonathan Durst (Pyramid Technologies)**.

The American Amusement Machine Association is governed by 17 members who are elected by their peers to serve a three-year term on the AAMA Board of Directors. The AAMA Board is well-represented by acknowledged leaders from all sectors of the coin-operated industry. These dynamic individuals volunteer their time



Kirby



Dowd



Bacorn



Blair

and services in protecting and serving both the association and the coin-operated industry. Directors are elected in conjunction with the Association’s annual summer meeting.

The organization is headed by President **Joe Camarota** of **Alpha Omega Sales**, and Vice-President **Bryan Aune** of **AMI Entertainment**.

**Technically Creative** introduced its new Creative Sales Manager, **Clive Powell**. Powell is known for his passion for creating wonderful experiences within the amusement industry.

Powell began his career as a commercial illustrator and marketing professional, specializing within the leisure sector. He then made the jump to move into the leisure attraction arena, designing innovative and creative children’s soft play and laser tag arenas all over the world. From there, Clive became involved with the theming industry, designing and manufacturing an array of thrilling attractions. Since then, he has worked as a consultant and headed up the creative divisions of some of the industry’s best-known creative manufacturers. He has designed attractions for **Sundown Adventureland**, **Paulton’s Park**, **Drayton Manor** and **Blackpool Tower** among others.

“Clive joining the organization really was a no brainer,” said **Marc Broadbent**, founder and director of Technically Creative. “The passion, creativity and knowledge that he brings is breathtaking, skills that cannot be taught!”

**Michael Rubinelli** has been appointed CEO of **Mogul**, an Australian company that operates a tournament and matchmaking platform allowing players to compete for prizes in all the major esports titles.

The former **Electronic Arts**, **Disney** and **Midway**, Rubinelli has been in the game industry for more than 20 years, working at both large corporations and startups.

Mogul operates the tournament and matchmaking platform Mogul.gg, which allows players of any skill level, along with teams and game publishers, to connect with one another and compete for prizes in all the major esports titles.

“Video Gaming revenue has the very real potential to be a trillion dollar business over the next 10 years,” said Rubinelli in a statement. “One of those drivers of growth is esports. Interactive gaming is the largest entertainment revenue generating vertical in the world earning more than box office and music sales combined.”

Veteran **NBCUniversal** executive **Ron Meyer** has left the company after quarter of a century.

NBCUniversal CEO **Jeff Shell** just announced the news in a company memo: “Ron Meyer informed NBCUniversal that he had acted in a manner which we believe is not consistent with our company policies or values ... We have mutually concluded that Ron should leave the company ... We thank Ron for his 25 years of service, and for his significant contributions to NBCUniversal.”

Meyer began as President & COO of Universal Studios in 1995, replacing **Sidney J. Sheinberg**.



Powell



Rubinelli



Meyer



**MARKET WATCH**

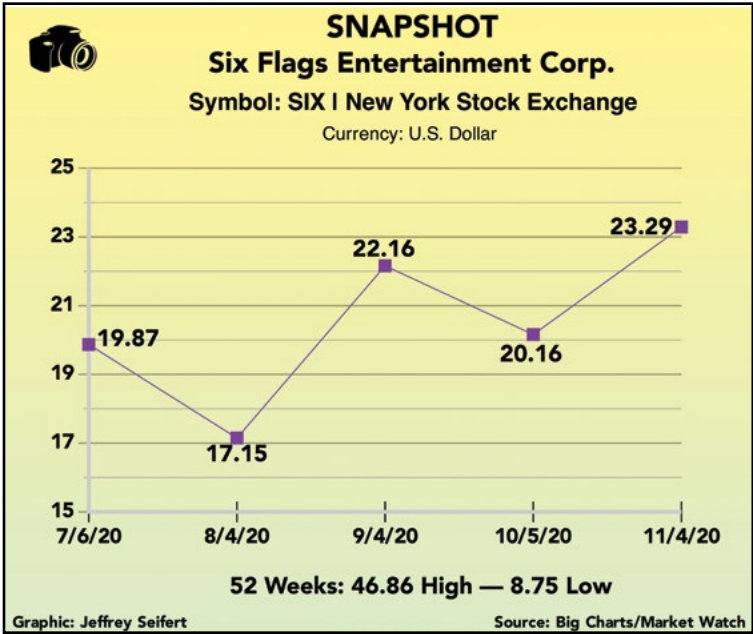
COMPANY	SYMBOL	MARKET	PRICE 11/5/20	HIGH 52-Week	LOW 52-Week
The Blackstone Group	BX	NYSE	57.45	64.97	33.00
Cedar Fair, L.P.	FUN	NYSE	28.98	57.50	13.00
Comcast Corp./NBCUniversal Media	CMCSA	NASDAQ	44.35	47.74	31.70
The Walt Disney Company	DIS	NYSE	126.96	153.41	79.07
Dubai Parks & Resorts	DXBE:UH	DFM	0.12	0.22	0.09
EPR Properties	EPR	NYSE	24.66	74.65	12.55
Fuji Kyoko Co., Ltd.	9010	TYO	4670.00	4775.00	2080.00
Haichang Holdings Ltd.	HK:2255	SEHK	0.40	1.09	0.38
Leofoo Development Co.	TW:2705	TSEC	22.20	23.05	9.08
MGM Resorts International	MGM	NYSE	21.84	34.63	5.90
Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.	RCL	NYSE	60.17	135.31	19.25
Sansei Technologies, Inc.	JP:6357	TYO	581.00	971.00	490.00
SeaWorld Entertainment, Inc.	SEAS	NYSE	24.55	36.96	6.75
Six Flags Entertainment Co.	SIX	NYSE	24.60	46.86	8.75
Tivoli A/S	DK:TIV	CSE	664.00	788.00	550.00
Village Roadshow	AU:VRL	ASX	2.28	4.10	0.77

STOCK PRICES ABOVE ARE GENERALLY QUOTED IN THE FOREIGN CURRENCY IN WHICH THE COMPANY IS LOCATED

**Worldwide Markets:** **ASX**, Australian Securities Exchange; **CSE**, Copenhagen Stock Exchange; **LSE**, London Stock Exchange; **NYSE**, New York Stock Exchange; **NASDAQ**, National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations; **SEHK**, Hong Kong Stock Exchange; **SZSE**, Shenzhen Stock Exchange; **TSEC**, Taiwan Stock Exchange, Corp.; **TYO/TSE**, Tokyo Stock Exchange

—SOURCES: Bloomberg.com; Wall Street Journal

Six Flags Over Texas transformed the park's Carousel into a Scarousel for the month of October.  
AT/TIM BALDWIN



**DIESEL PRICES**

Region (U.S.)	As of 11/2/20	Change from 1 year ago
East Coast	\$2.070	-\$0.406
Midwest	\$1.969	-\$0.447
Gulf Coast	\$2.131	-\$0.664
Mountain	\$2.324	-\$0.842
West Coast	\$2.541	-\$0.872
California	\$3.231	-\$0.780

**CURRENCY**

On 11/5/20 \$1 USD =

0.8550	EURO
0.7695	GBP (British Pound)
104.64	JPY (Japanese Yen)
0.9132	CHF (Swiss Franc)
1.4002	AUD (Australian Dollar)
1.3178	CAD (Canadian Dollar)

**BUSINESS WATCH**

**Six Flags announces third quarter earnings**

ARLINGTON, Texas — **Six Flags Entertainment Corporation** (NYSE: SIX) reported a decline in revenue and earnings, as anticipated, for the third quarter and first nine months of 2020 as compared to the same periods in 2019. Nine of the company's 26 parks were closed in the third quarter due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and parks that were open during the period were subject to attendance limitations. The company continues to maintain a cautious and safety-first approach to operating its parks to ensure compliance with social distancing and other safety measures, in accordance with local conditions and government guidelines.

While operating conditions continue to be challenging, attendance trends improved from a range of 20% to 25% of prior year levels upon the initial reopening of certain parks in the second quarter to approximately 35% in the third quarter, for the parks that were open. The company opened its water park in Oaxtepec, Mexico, on September 12 and its theme park in Mexico City on October 23, and announced plans to open **Six Flags Great America**, in Illinois, for a holiday walk-through experience during late November through December.

"The early results of our operational transformation appear extremely promising, and I believe that we will emerge from the pandemic as a stronger and more profitable organization," stated **Mike Spanos**, Six Flags' president and CEO. "We made substantial progress towards our goal of modernizing the guest experience as we become a more agile, consumer-centric, productive, and technology-savvy organization. We expect the transformation to enable significant profit growth once our plan is fully executed in a post-pandemic environment."

**Cedar Fair reports Q3, positive steps taken**

SANDUSKY, Ohio — **Cedar Fair Entertainment Company** (NYSE: FUN), announced results for its third quarter which ended on Sept. 27, 2020.

"Despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, we continue to take positive steps to bridge the crisis and position the company for a return to historical performance levels as quickly as possible," said Cedar Fair President and CEO **Richard A. Zimmerman**. "While operations continue to be challenged, we are very pleased with how demand trends have continued to improve at the parks that have reopened, and we are encouraged by the learnings and momentum we've gained heading into 2021. Attendance has progressed from a range of 20% to 25% of comparable prior year levels upon the initial reopening of parks in late June and early July, to 35% to 40% over the last three months."

Due to the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the company, results for the third-quarter ended Sept. 27, 2020, include the partial operations of only seven parks and are not directly comparable to results for the 2019 third quarter ended Sept. 29, 2019, which included the full operations of the legacy Cedar Fair parks as well as operations of the two Schlitterbahn water parks acquired on July 1, 2019. With six of the company's 13 properties remaining closed in 2020, the third quarter had a total of 314 operating days, compared to 1,035 operating days in the prior-year period.

**SeaWorld reports \$79M loss in third quarter**

ORLANDO — **SeaWorld Entertainment** saw a significant drop in attendance and revenue at its theme parks in the third quarter. SeaWorld had a nearly 81% drop in attendance and a net loss of more than \$79 million this year compared to 2019.

Top officials said that was due to pandemic restrictions like fewer operating days and hours, capacity limitations, and limits to the amount of money spent on marketing.

SeaWorld's interim CEO, **March Swanson**, said in an investors call that monthly attendance improved during the quarter, with the modified Halloween Spooktacular bringing capacity-level crowds to SeaWorld parks and **Busch Gardens Tampa Bay's** Howl-O-Scream event drawing 60% of last year's attendance.



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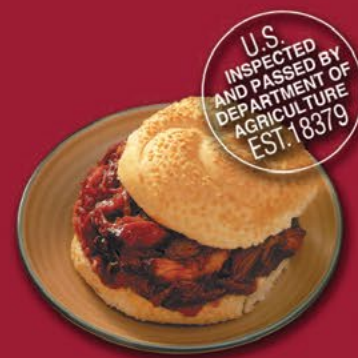


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# SAFETY, MAINTENANCE & OPERATIONS

► Sunkid provides coaster train to Conny-Land — page 64 / Harold Hudson to keynote AIMS seminar — page 68

## Safety seminars and organizations change up plans for 2021

AT: Pam Sherborne

psherborne@amusementtoday.com

Organizations and associations that present annual safety seminars have been looking at options to be able to offer the seminars along with the ride safety certification exams and keep students and instructors safe.

Some are going strictly virtual, such as the AIMS safety seminar, while others are utilizing a blended event with both in-person and virtual options such as NAARSO.

Following are current safety seminar plans for 2021.

### AIMS Safety Seminar

AIMS announced the organization's first-ever **AIMS Virtual Safety Seminar** last month. The event is set to run Jan. 11-15, 2021.

**Mary Jane Brewer**, AIMS executive director, said although it is a given that a virtual seminar could never duplicate the in-person event, they still have set the bar high, to create and deliver a high-quality and easily-accessible virtual educational program.

AIMS plans to offer 120 to 160 hours of content that will include different track areas. Course areas will include aquatics, inspection, maintenance and safety. Several courses will be offered in Spanish.

This is the first year AIMS has offered a track entirely in Spanish. It is being presented by **Loyola Hugo**, **Fantasiandia**, Santiago, Chile.

The aquatics track is being delivered by **Ellis and Associations**.

AIMS has hired **O'Design**, a virtual event



Unlike the in-person classroom settings of previous years (left), the AIMS 2021 International Safety Seminar will be completely virtual. Both safety seminars presented in Pennsylvania (right) by in-state organizations were canceled for the fall. Both have been set, at least for now, for in-person in 2021. AT/GARY SLADE, B. DEREK SHAW

production company, to fully produce and provide the video player and platform for a "simulive" seminar.

Plans are to pre-record all sessions and include a time after each for live interaction between instructors and students. Other live networking opportunities also will be available.

•[aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org)

### NAARSO Safety Seminar

Due to COVID-19, **NAARSO** has planned to present its 2021 safety seminar both in person and virtually. Both portions will run simultaneously Jan. 25-29. The in-person segment will be held at the **Avanti Palms Resort and Convention Center**, Orlando, Florida.

There is limited space for the in-person segment. Because of this, there will be minimal duplication of classes ensuring important classes needed for certification examinations will be held. In addition, some specialty and Train the Trainer classes have been canceled.

NAARSO is working to

keep attendees and instructors safe for the in-person portion by adhering to requirements set by the State of Florida and local Orlando authorities. Information for attendees will be sent out closer to the seminar.

In-person seminar attendees who plan to select the Operations Program will be assigned all operations classes and do not need to make a class selection. Those selecting either Inspector Program will receive an emailed registration form they will use to make their class selections.

Virtual attendees will receive emails at a later date containing attendance sheets, access information and rules governing the virtual classes.

Class changes will not be allowed once the registration form is submitted.

•[naarso.com](http://naarso.com)

### Northwest Showmen's Club (NWSC) Safety Seminar

Safety seminar planners of the NWSC initially thought that they would cancel the 2021 seminar. They knew that the coronavirus pandemic has



impacted those in the amusement industry financially and felt it would be hard for people to attend and stay within their budgets.

But when that information was received by those still with the seminar on their calendars, they began getting phone calls asking if it were possible to put together a two-day seminar. People wanted to be able to get their certifications that they needed in 2021.

After meeting, NWSC seminar planners decided, yes, they could do it. In addition, they plan to use the savings they would have incurred from not having the regular seminar to fund the bulk of the two-day seminar.

The two-day event is set for the **Funtastic Shows Campus**, Portland, Oregon, Feb. 16 and 17.

There will be no NAARSO or AIMS testing this year.

At the first of November, the state of Oregon had only reached Phase 1 of reopening. That limits the number of in-person students to 50. But if the state moves into the next phase,

NWSC seminar planners would be able to open more seats.

The number of classes offered will be based on the number of students that can be accommodated at the time.

The organization is looking for additional funding in the form of donations for the show to keep the costs low for attendees.

•[nwshowmensclub.com](http://nwshowmensclub.com)

### Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar and Parks and Carnival Education (PACE)

Due to ongoing COVID-19 mitigation, sponsors of the two Pennsylvania ride safety seminars announced in August that its fall 2020 seminars would be canceled.

The Pennsylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar is conducted by **Slaggett Risk Management** for the **Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, Amusement Ride Safety Division**. It is usually held in early November.

The spring 2021 Penn-

► See SEMINARS, page 60

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The international Ride Training iROC Ride Camp (left) 2021 will be a blended event with five smaller regional camps throughout the year and a virtual component. Ohio's Midwest Safety and Operations Conference currently still plans to offer hands-on training in Spring 2021. COURTESY IRT; AT/JOHN W.C. ROBINSON

# SCHOOL IS BACK ON

## and SAFETY is being taught at the NWSC Safety Seminar

Due to Covid 19 and the restrictions, we are working hard to put on a 2 day seminar.

At this time we are only allow to accommodate 50 students and we  
will take student registrations until we hit that number.

If the restrictions are loosened we will allow more in at that time.

Until then get your registration in ASAP if you want to attend.

We know that everyone in the industry has been financially hit hard that is  
Why we are only charging \$50 for the 2 days of classes.

### SPECIAL PANDEMIC SEMINAR

When: February 22nd & 23rd 2021

Where: Funtastic Shows Campus - 3407 SE 108th Ave, Portland, Oregon 97266

Times: 7:30 am to 5:30 pm

Fee: \$50

Meals: Lunch will be served daily and is included in registration fee

**Go to our web site to register  
and for more information**

[www.nwshowmensclub.com](http://www.nwshowmensclub.com)

503-519-4867



## ► SEMINARS

Continued from page 58

sylvania Amusement Ride Safety Seminar looks to still be on. It is set for March 2-4, at the **Red Lion Hotel**, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

The other ride safety seminar, known as **PACE**, is jointly sponsored by the **Pennsylvania State Showmen's Association (PSSA)** and the **Pennsylvania Amusement Parks and Attractions (PAPA)**. It is normally held in late October.

The 2021 PACE Ride Safety Seminar will be rescheduled in late October for Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania, and **Knoebels Amusement Resort**, Elysburg, Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania state certified inspectors who are in good standing and have certifications that expire in November and December 2020 have been granted a one-year extension of their expiration date.

Quality Assurance Inspections done by the Pennsylvania State Amusement Ride Safety Division have not stopped.

### **International Ride Training International Ride Operator Certification (iROC)**

#### **Ride Camp**

International Ride Training (IRT) has planned for a blended in-person and virtual International Ride Operator Certification (iROC) Safety School, Ride Camp for 2021.

Recognizing that travel restrictions and other health concerns may limit the ability of some to attend Ride Camp, IRT will hold five in-person locations in 2021. iROC instructor candidates may attend this at any of the locations for training and instructor certification testing.

The first has been set for Feb. 23-25, 2021, on the east coast. Dates and locations of all locations will be released soon.

Regional Ride Camp attendees will have the opportunity to access a host of on-demand Ride Camp course offerings online and to participate virtually in a few live sessions during the first Ride Camp event.

IRT will have strict COVID-19 safety practices in place at all Ride Camp locations in accordance with applicable state and local requirements.

► See SEMINARS, page 62





## NEWS & NOTES

[www.aimsintl.org](http://www.aimsintl.org)

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**Holly Coston**, (714) 697-6654, [h.coston@aimsintl.org](mailto:h.coston@aimsintl.org)

### Register for the world's leading amusement industry safety seminar

With more than 250 students expected, it is time to sign up for the 2021 **AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar** and select from over 120 different course offerings that best fit your needs. New this year, **Ellis & Associates** will deliver the seminar's aquatics curriculum, ensuring a comprehensive and innovative program providing the most current industry information and global trends. Additionally, this year's seminar will include over 20 hours of inspection and maintenance education delivered entirely in Spanish.

The virtual seminar will take place January 11-15, 2021, and feature a mixture of live and pre-recorded content, plus all sessions will include live Q&A. As an added benefit of going virtual this year, seminar content will be available to registered attendees for an additional two weeks through January 29. All courses taken during the three-week time period, whether live or on-demand, will be accepted for CEU credit. Meaning, attendees will receive access to over 120 courses for three weeks and, at the same

time, earn the CEUs needed to renew their safety certifications.

Tuition is \$495 for a limited time only, and the CEU certificate is included in the price. Visit [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org) for more information or to register for the seminar.

#### Keynote address by Harold Hudson

We are proud to announce that amusement industry icon, **Harold Hudson**, will be delivering the keynote address at this year's AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar on Monday, January 11, 2021. Harold is well known as an expert in amusement ride safety and currently serves on several industry safety committees, including ASTM F24. Harold's address will include topics related to determining and adopting industry best practices, coping with change and remembering the basics of a safe operation — ideas that are all the more important considering the toll the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the attractions industry. We look forward to hearing Harold's words of wisdom

and are honored that he will be delivering the keynote address at this year's safety seminar.

#### Nominations for the AIMS International Safety Award are now being accepted

The AIMS International Safety Award is presented annually to the individual or organization that demonstrates leadership, innovation, and foresight in improving safety in the amusement industry. With safety as the industry's number one priority for guests and employees worldwide, efforts in improving safety are shown in many forms: the design and implementation of new products and technology, the development of safety education programs and training, and by exemplary leadership in influencing others. The award nomination form can be found at [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org).

The winner will be selected by a vote of AIMS International's Board of Directors and presented by the inaugural AIMS International Safety Award recipient, Harold Hudson during the 2021

AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar Keynote Address. The deadline for award nomination is December 4, 2020.

#### Support the mission of AIMS by becoming a Safety Seminar Sponsor

AIMS International is a non-profit association and industry support of this important annual Safety Seminar is vital to the health and prosperity of the entire amusement industry. The move to a virtual event has created new opportunities to keep you front and center as an AIMS International Safety Seminar sponsor. For sponsorship information, please contact **Mary Jane Brewer** at 714.425.5747, email [mj.brewer@aimsintl.org](mailto:mj.brewer@aimsintl.org) or visit [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org).

#### Safety Seminar scholarships are available

Several scholarships to the AIMS International Virtual Safety Seminar are now available! Application forms can be found on our website, [aimsintl.org](http://aimsintl.org). The deadline to submit a scholarship application is December 4, 2020.

Space for this AIMS page is provided courtesy of *Amusement Today* as a corporate partner of AIMS Intl. Content is provided by AT & AIMS.



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## SEMINARS

Continued from page 60

Ride Camp is not limited to iROC facilities exclusively, and 2021 will be only slightly different in that regard. To continue that tradition, the virtual aspects of Ride Camp 2021 are open and available to all, regardless of whether their facility is iROC Certified. Representatives from those facilities will be able to participate in the full array of virtual course offerings, including on-demand sessions and live course broadcasts.

Whether attending Ride Camp 2021 in person or virtually, training courses will focus on topics including the "10 Critical Components of Ride Operator Safety." In addition, the topics will include guest service and efficiency, operations in a COVID-19 world, accessibility and the ADA, hiring and staffing strategies, motivating ride operators, training tools and techniques, and incident response and investigation, among others.

There will also be sessions giving participants the opportunity to share best practices, discuss industry hot topics, and learn directly from one another.

Registration for Ride Camp 2021 will be open soon.

•ridetraining.com

### Midwest Safety and Operations Conference

The Greater Ohio Showmen's Association (GOSA) staged a successful inaugural Midwest Safety and Operations Conference in March of 2020. It made it just under the line of shut-downs and safer-at-home mandates created by the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S.

A look at the conference website in early November shows that GOSA plans, for right now, to go ahead with its second annual conference set for March 1-3, 2021, at the Kalamazoo Resort and Convention Center in Sandusky, Ohio.

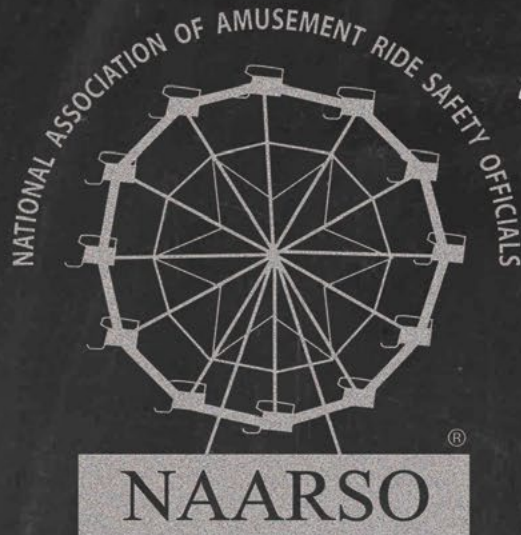
For its inaugural event, there were 48 participants for NAARSO training, 21 concessionaires for Person in Charge Ohio Food Education certification and 72 people for operation workshops.

Those interested in attending should check back with the organization to see if there will be any cancellations and/or changes.

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Non-members are \$600 (through 12/31/2020); \$650 (after 12/31/2020)

**Virtual School attendance:**

Members are \$350 Non-members are \$450  
(Must register by January 20, 2021)

- CEU Certificate purchase will be \$40 for members and \$50 for non-members
- Certification Examination fee for Limited Specialty and Level I Inspector or Operator is \$75, Level II Inspector or Operator is \$100 and Level III Inspector is \$125.

NOTE: Effective January 1, 2021, NAARSO Membership is required for Certification.

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# Conny-Land adds new coaster train from Sunkid, face-to-face thrills

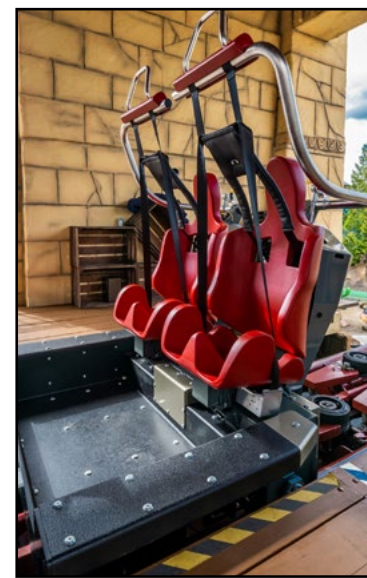
AT: Tim Baldwin  
tbaldwin@amusementtoday.com

LIPPERSWIL, Switzerland — Guests to Conny-Land are presented with a whole new twist on the park's signature roller coaster, Cobra. Built by PAX, the one-of-a-kind coaster features a backward vertical lift, plunge through the station, two camelback hills and a loop. After the navigating the loop, riders travel upward into a "scorpion tail" hangover section of track. From there, the train plummets backward into the loop and over the hills back into the station.

For its tenth anniversary, the attraction got a refresh. A new train provided by Sunkid Heege offers a completely new experience for visitors. This new train features seating configurations that place riders face to face, with the exception of seats in the front row and the back row.

"This is an innovation that visitors love enormously, in particular in a shuttle loop coaster like the Cobra," said Roby Gasser, general manager, Conny-Land.

Sunkid is pleased that the train offers greater comfort. Instead of being restricted by solid shoulder restraints, the



Cobra features a vertical loop as well as a unique hangover reverse point. The new train configuration seats riders back to back and face to face (above left and middle) and offers more comfortable restraints (above right). COURTESY SUNKID

rider is now hugged with padded belts. C-brackets serve to guide the closed belt system and also act as redundancy.

Gasser said the ride has seen renewed ridership and a great reaction. He also believes it extends the longevity of the ride.

"This was my idea," he said. "[To invest] a huge amount of money, it had to be different."

"The [previous] train was pretty much reaching the end of its [service] life, and customers complained about high maintenance and little riding comfort,"

said Georg Dobbler, sales and product manager, Sunkid. "We made winter service for the old train for this customer already, so he knew about our capabilities. Eventually the complete train needed to be replaced. I think the customer liked that we listened to his ideas and that we were flexible."

The fully adjustable and dampened undercarriage ensures a more pleasant ride feel and reduces the forces that act on the mechanics, extending the service life. Lifetime-lubricated bearings and the

optimized size of the components reduce the maintenance and inspection efforts required.

"Targeted improvements were introduced in the areas of operation and maintenance," said Sunkid CEO Michael Kalsch.

Amusement Today asked if the back-to-back seating produced any engineering challenges. "The track has quite tight angles at the inversions and therefore the length of the individual cars is limited," said Dobbler. "We especially looked at how to sequence and dimension

the seats and the aisle onto the carriage."

The coaster is built on a linear piece of land with a track length of 705 feet. It stands at almost 138 feet tall and reaches 53 mph.

"It's just fun to see the opposite face. From the first season we can tell that people like to do a second ride, as the sensation is very different depending where you are facing," said Dobbler. "It's actually like you have two different rides in one now."

•sunkidworld.com

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# Mobaro launches package to help attractions safeguard quality

CHARLESTON, W. Va. — Mobaro offers the leisure, sport and entertainment industry a software and consultancy service to effectively take care of safety, maintenance and security procedures. From years of collaboration with industry professionals, the company has developed the technology and knowhow to enable its clients to take better care of their number one priority: safety.

In 2015, **Mobaro** set out to unite the safety, maintenance and operations routines and the teams operating them in one software platform. Now, with more than 100 attraction clients using the system daily, the company is taking its software to the next level.

With the introduction of Advanced Compliance Management (ACM), Mobaro is adding a new dimension that can increase the accuracy and assurance in any process.

"These days, all eyes are on safety. Now more than ever, it is necessary to be attentive to details and behavior on all levels of your business," said **Henrik F. Have**, CEO at Mobaro.



With the introduction of Advanced Compliance Management (ACM), Mobaro adds a new dimension to its platform. Several control mechanisms have been developed, which have enabled users to reach new levels of accuracy and reliability in safety, maintenance and operations processes. COURTESY MOBARO

"That's why we are particularly excited to present the industry with this new set of features. Attractions will be able to reach unprecedented levels of compliance and certainty that all aspects are being tended to, from ride maintenance to health and cleaning protocols."

## Bringing managers into the inspection loop

With self-service content-building and easy distribution of inspection and work orders, Mobaro is already a solid digital tool for handling safety, maintenance and operations routines.

The new package adds a superior level to the system. It gives the user an overview of available jobs, prompts when users are too far from the site inspected using GPS, passed a certain deadline or working too fast. ACM also gives managers a means of double-

checking and "inspecting the inspection." This way, Mobaro now supports a "Four-eyes principle" or "Two-man rule."

"In order to improve and ensure the quality of inspections, we realized that we needed to create a whole new workflow that starts when the inspection ends," said **Morten Kristensen**, Mobaro's senior developer.

Managers and supervisors are able to actively review inspections and approve, disapprove, invalidate or re-schedule entire inspection runs.

## Stronger documentation in liability cases

On top of enabling higher quality, Mobaro is also able to offer more detailed documentation for inspection bodies or in the unfortunate events of liability claims. Businesses using the system are able to present unprecedented levels of detail from their built-in archive of reports that holds all entries from all inspections conducted.

With ACM, Mobaro has added a new dimension to its comprehensive platform.

•mobaro.com

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## AIMS safety seminar will be keynoted by Hudson



Harold Hudson (center) will be the keynote speaker at the 2021 AIMS Virtual Safety Seminar. Hudson is pictured here receiving the inaugural AIMS Safety Award in 2016. AT/FILE

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — AIMS International announced that Harold Hudson, president and CEO AAPRA Associates, will deliver the keynote address at the 2021 Virtual Safety Seminar.

Prior to joining AAPRA, Hudson spent more than 21 years with Six Flags Theme Parks as the senior vice president of engineering and development. He has

extensive knowledge in ride and attractions development, theme park development and park operations, capital planning, and the evaluation of ride systems and manufacturers.

Hudson was a founding member of the ASTM F24 Standards Committee and serves on several industry standards and safety commissions and panels where his knowledge of technical safety issues often leads to industry change. He has been a leading advocate of systems that accommodate disabled guests. Valued as a consultant, Hudson conducts independent engineering reviews and he is often called as a safety and expert witness in legal proceedings after complicated incidents in our industry.

"Harold is an icon in the amusement industry and a driving force behind many of today's industry wide safety standards," said AIMS International Executive Director MJ Brewer. "We are thrilled to have him delivering this year's keynote address."

In 2016, Hudson was the inaugural recipient of the AIMS International Safety Award and will present this year's award during his keynote on January 11, 2021. Presented annually, this award goes to the individual or organization that demonstrates leadership, innovation, and foresight in improving safety in the amusement industry.

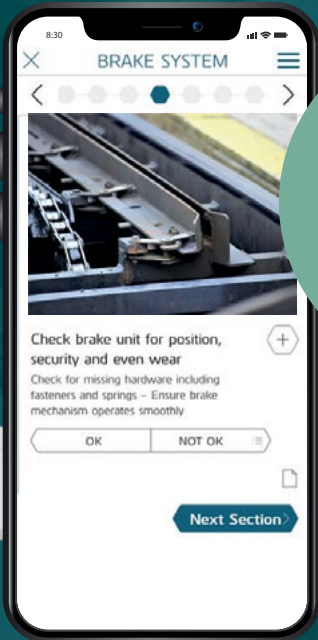
With safety as the industry's number one priority for guests and employees worldwide, efforts in improving safety are shown in many forms: the design and implementation of new products and technology, the development of safety education programs and training, and by exemplary leadership in influencing others. Nominations for the AIMS International Safety Award are accepted through December 1, 2020.

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## BREAKING NEWS

## Free COVID testing offered at Quassy

MIDDLEBURY, Conn. — To help serve the community during the latest rise in COVID-19 infections, **Griffin Health** of Derby, Connecticut, partnered with the **Connecticut Department of Public Health** to provide community outbreak COVID-19 testing at **Quassy Amusement & Waterpark**.

The Quassy testing site began Friday, November 3, and is open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. every Friday until further notice. Testing is free, no appointment necessary, and results are available in 24-48 hours. Testing requires valid identification.

"We're certainly pleased to open up our parking area for this worthwhile cause," said Quassy President **Eric Anderson** said. "We trust local and area residents will take advantage to be tested during this drive-through opportunity."

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**Griffith Health conducts free COVID-19 testing at Quassy.**  
COURTESY QUASSY



subsidiary of the **Griffin Health Services Corporation**, **Griffin Hospital** is a 160-bed acute care community hospital serving more than 130,000 residents of the Lower Naugatuck Valley Region.

Griffin Hospital also serves as the flagship hospital for **Planetree**, an international leader in patient-centered care and has received national recognition for creating a health-

care facilities and an approach to patient care that is responsive to the needs of patients. Many healthcare organizations around the world send visitors to Griffin Hospital's facilities and incorporate its Planetree concepts into their healthcare models.

•quassy.com



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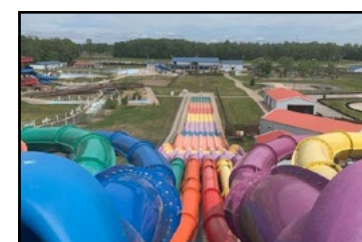
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- ✓ We will lead the industry into a new era of effective Loss Control and Risk Management programming designed to reduce our client's exposure to loss or injury.
- ✓ We will continue to lead the industry in support of critically important trade associations and industry partners.
- ✓ We will creatively and expertly guide our clients through their risk management planning for the unknown economic environment in 2020, 2021 and beyond.

Most importantly, we will commit all of our energy, resources and experience to making sure our Amusement Industry clients are protected and in a position to be as successful as the opportunities ahead allow—we are YOUR PARTNER!

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